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ELEANOR KIRK, Author and Publisher

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LIBRA:

AN

ASTROLOGICAL ROMANCE.

BY

ELEANOR KIRK.

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LIBRA:

AN ASTROLOGICAL ROMANCE.

I.

CAPRICORN knew that he was in love with the bright and beautiful Libra. Capricorn usually knew his own mind, and rarely swerved from his first impressions. He first met Libra at a party, where in half mourning for her father—a costume which was her abhorrence—she was gayly waltzing with the handsomest and probably the fastest man in the room. When the dance was over, and the fair, tall girl stood chatting with a group of admirers, Capricorn, fine-looking, perfectly attired, grave but smiling, was presented to the object of his admiration.

"She is as lovely as Aphrodite," he told

himself, "but she lacks taste and discretion. I should like to tell her so."

This was the dominant thought in Capricorn's mind, as he bowed courteously over the daintily-gloved hand extended to him.

"I see you are very fond of dancing, Miss Eastman," he remarked.

"Oh, yes, extremely; and you?"

"I like it occasionally. Will you promenade a few moments?"

It was the sturdiest of sturdy arms that Libra's hand rested upon, and she found herself wondering what it was about this man that affected her so strangely and seemed so different from any other personality she had ever met. And then she wondered why she was ill at ease. Libra was always on good terms with strangers and never timid nor reticent.

They walked the length of the room without speaking, and then Libra said quite abruptly, almost as if the words were forced from her lips:

"In your remark about my liking to dance, did you mean that I seemed to you to care

more about it than other young ladies of your acquaintance?"

"Yes, I really think that was my impression."

Libra's cheeks paled, then flushed again. The vague consciousness of something unpleasant, uncomplimentary in her companion's mind, that had taken possession of her the moment she had looked into his eyes, became now a definite understanding.

The middle sign of the air triplicity is a peculiar region to hail from. Its natives could be omniscient if they would stay in one place long enough to attain an equilibrium. But Libra did not know her native air. She knew that she loved the clouds more than the sea or the mountains; that she envied the birds—the wild birds—that could fly high and that no man could shoot or tame. She had not been told that an October child had a right to all the stellar spaces, and that she could see farther and truer than many others because of this birthplace. She did not know that she was the daughter of Hope, that Venus was her god-

mother, and opals and diamonds her own precious stones. She was ignorant of all these things. What she did know was that she was very often extremely uncomfortable on account of feelings that she was unable to analyze and was ashamed to speak of.

At this particular moment she was miserable.

"My chance remark appears to have been taken somewhat seriously," Capricorn observed after another pregnant pause.

"But was it a chance remark?"

Children of the air dare everything, and this was exactly like the generic Libra.

"What leads you to suppose that it was anything more?" Capricorn inquired, still grave and apparently unperturbed.

"It is more than a year since I have danced a step," the girl replied, an apology in her voice as well as in her words, "and it was so beautiful after so long a fast. Perhaps I should not have enjoyed myself so much with—with—this gown on."

It was hard to force down the sob that almost choked the words, and tears were

dangerously near. It is very damp going to and coming from the Libra homestead, very, very misty indeed. But when these people learn to stay where they belong—and there never was so hard a lesson—their eyes are clear and bright, their faces radiant.

Capricorn was an honest fellow, and his feet were firmly planted on the earth, his own native element. It was a mystery, almost a miracle, to him that his companion could have divined his thought, but as she had done so he would not try to deceive her. On the contrary, he would, as was his Capricorn duty, enforce the proper moral. A disregard of *les convenances* is an unpardonable offence in the estimation of those who are born under the last sign of the earth triplicity, and Capricorn knew that his interest must be of a very marked and unusual character to make him willing to promenade with the girl who had so defied them.

So he said very firmly and quietly:

"I knew it must be your great fondness for the waltz that led you to forget—"

"But I did not forget—I never can forget.

How dare you say such a cruel thing to me? There hasn't been a moment this evening that I have not remembered. How could you, and—and you a stranger——"

All the time that the girl had been speaking she had tried to disengage her hand from her companion's arm; he held it firmly and led the way to another room, which was dimly lighted and practically vacant.

"Just one moment," he said quietly. "Let your hand remain where it is until I explain, and then I will take you back to your friends. Just one question, which please answer honestly. Did you not in reality force me to make the remark which has hurt you so cruelly, and was it not your own intuition that spoke to you, and did you not interrupt and thus misunderstand me? I entreat you to believe that I had no intention of saying what you imagined I was about to say."

"Oh, I see."

Libra ever seeks to be just. The scales tremble to hang evenly, and when one goes

up, and the other down, it is often on account of the mistaken effort to right them.

"I knew you would understand when the matter was properly presented. I am a blunt man, and perhaps a little too mindful of conventionalities. In fact I have often been told so by my friends, but I did not mean to be rude to you, and I would not have hurt your feelings for the world."

"I am sure you would not." Our slender, graceful Libra was smiling now, and a mischievous expression had come into her eyes that Capricorn thought was the most fascinating of anything he had ever seen in his life.

"But," she added, "you will pardon me, please, if I do not agree with your critics in regard to your strict observance of the proprieties, although of course you may expect more of others in such matters than you require of yourself."

"I don't think I follow you."

Capricorn scowled now, but Libra was not looking at him.

"I am thinking," the girl went on, "of the masterful manner in which you retained my hand on your arm. Would your friends call that conventional?"

"Hardly, but you have entirely forgiven me?"

"There is nothing to forgive. You were quite right."

That settled it with the man. He knew that some one should have aroused this girl to the impropriety of waltzing in a mourning costume, and he was pleased that it had been his privilege. And it had been accomplished in such a strange manner.

"I never took any stock in thought transference, and telepathy, and other rot of the kind people seem to be going mad over in these days," he told himself, "but I will admit that this is the queerest experience of my life. There must be some common-sense way of getting to the bottom of it. I'll think it out."

A few moments later Libra was the centre of an admiring circle, but she refused every invitation to dance.

"Just one little spin," smiled the handsomest man in the room.

"Thank you, not to-night."

"But other young ladies seem so tame after dancing with you, Miss Eastman."

"I wonder if you say that to everybody."

"You know I do not, and you also know that you excel all other women in dancing because you love to dance more than they."

Oh! how she did love it! And what was the harm? What heavenly music was this, and how every atom of her body and every pulsation of her soul seemed to vibrate to the rhythmical harmony! Her eyes shone bright and tender with the love-light that the music had kindled, and for a moment the black gown was forgotten. The man who stood in front of her, waiting with extended hand to swing her into the sweet strain, was also forgotten. He was simply the aid that society had provided for her enjoyment. Mechanically her left hand moved toward her companion's, and then she looked up and caught the eye of Capricorn, who was standing only a few feet away.

"You know I told you I should not dance any more to-night," she remarked, angry now with herself and all the world.

"Pardon me—but 'the woman who hesitates,' you know. I really thought you were reconsidering."

"I was listening to the music and was oblivious to everything else."

"Reconsidering?" All the way home this word held possession of her mind. It seemed so true, so expressive, and so perfectly to fit her case. Why, she asked herself, was she forever vacillating, continually halting between two opinions? Other people seemed to have ordinary intelligence and the ability to use it. Why had she been so easily persuaded, so perfectly won over by the high and mighty air of this tall, dark, impertinent stranger? How dared he speak to her as he did? And what did he say? Nothing. She said it herself. She was the only one to blame. What business had she poking round in other people's minds to find out what they thought of her? A man had a right to his own thoughts, and she had a

perfect right to dance if she pleased in a half-mourning gown. The very idea of a man whom she had seen that night for the first time telling her—no, he didn't tell her—but having the audacity to think a critical thought of her. A man's thoughts were really not his own, if he thought them so loud that his neighbors could hear him think. Well, there was one comfort. She need never see this disagreeable creature again unless she chose, and that was not in the realm of probabilities.

It was a long time before Libra placed her head upon the pillow that night. She was very wide awake and more than ever disturbed and out of tune. Life seemed a sad tangle to this sensitive, impressionable, intuitive girl, who at the age of twenty had no more conception of her capabilities, her true power, than the unborn child.

It was a superb night, and as Libra turned her eyes to the star-lit firmament she grew calmer and happier.

"Why do I not see the angels ascending and descending?" she asked herself. "I

know they are coming and going this very minute. I wonder why one can feel more than one can see. Oh! if I could talk just a minute or two with papa before I go to sleep. He used to straighten out the tangles for me, but mamma isn't a bit of use. Papa never liked mourning clothes, and how he did love to see me dance! If I had been compelled to wear black, he wouldn't have thought it any sin for me to dance in a black gown. Papa, dear, I did not forget you. You are sure, are you not, that I never can? You know now better than you ever did that I loved you more than all the world, and how well you knew that when you were with me. But you are here now, are you not, dearest? We will forever understand each other, will we not?"

"One can never lose a love, because love is immortal."

Libra glanced about the room a little strangely.

"Truly," she whispered as she walked toward the bed, "it did not seem as if I said that last thing. It wasn't in my head any

way. But I must remember it. 'One can never lose a love because love is immortal!' Oh, I am so glad."

A smile overspread the fair face, the white lids closed gently, and Libra was among her own people.

II.

THE next morning Libra found it very easy to laugh at the experiences of the evening. She wondered why everything always seemed so much brighter in the early part of the day. If there were only some wise man who could answer the questions that puzzled her, or who had written a book that would help her. She recalled that even in the first great trouble of her life, when her father lay cold and still in the room he had once made so cheery and beautiful by his presence, that she was not very miserable in the morning. Of course she would not have dared mention this fact to a single soul—she was almost ashamed to admit it to herself. Our children of the air, especially those who belong in the middle sign of the air triplicity, are prone to introspection, and as Libra sent her thought back to those occasions when she had met the miserable family at breakfast,

herself apparently more wretched than the rest, though far from being so, she felt ashamed, but whether because of her hardness of heart or her duplicity she could not have told. It was some satisfaction now to remember her awful wretchedness later in the day. She could discount them all then.

What would they have said had she acted according to her feelings? she asked herself. Suppose she had opened the piano and played the pieces her father was so fond of, as she longed to do every time she passed the instrument—in the mornings or at other times—what punishment and disgrace would have been her portion? They might not have adjudged her crazy and locked her up in her room with a keeper, but she would have had a sorry time of it. The very last thing she did for her father was to play for him over and over again the sonata he loved so dearly. It was all right then, but an hour later it was all wrong. Why? Perhaps, if she had yielded to her almost uncontrollable impulse, the joy of the music might have entered all their hearts, and, more than this,

might have comforted her father. Perhaps he would have liked her to play. She recalled one occasion when in the intermission of a symphony concert performance he had turned to her and said softly:

"When I listen to such music I feel perfectly the power and truth of Jesus Christ's words when He said, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.'"

Then it was precisely like Libra to speculate as to whether the kingdom of heaven was within her in the morning and the kingdom of hell the rest of the day. But it was all a sad jumble, and the worst of it was she had neither friend, philosopher, nor guide to strengthen or advise.

Air people are ever stretching out their hands for help. They suffer from the height and the rarefied atmosphere of their domain. They know they are content only when on these heights, but they do not recognize them as home. They regard themselves as aliens and strangers, and are perpetually at war because they are not like other people.

"Something will have to be done with

me," the girl remarked, as she left her room and passed down to breakfast.

"But who will do it? Probably a lot of impudent strangers like that man last night will keep on showing me the error of my ways, and then my family are not at all backward. I may attain a worldly poise after a while, if I try to profit by all the nagging and harsh criticism that is dealt out to me."

It was the mother's querulous voice that first greeted the belated girl. She was not usually late, but on this occasion the meal was half over before she took her place at the table.

"Dick has been telling me some strange things about your behavior last evening, and I don't think I was ever so shocked in my life," said the widow.

"You ought to be in bed and have the doctor," the girl replied calmly, "for if it is worse than anything you've ever had before it's dangerous."

"Don't be angry, Lib," said the brother. The girl's true name was Elizabeth, Eliza-

beth Eastman, but to us she must ever remain Libra. "I only said that you danced and seemed to have enjoyed a short and breezy flirtation with Horace Winterhead" (our Capricorn). "He's an awfully solid old chap; don't you think so, Lib?"

"Solid as the everlasting hills. His arm felt like the trunk of an oak as I tried to clasp it, and when I wanted to drop it I might as well have tried to move a lumber yard," and now Libra laughed till the tears glistened in her soft, gray eyes.

It was all very funny in this morning light, and even as she laughed she wondered if she would not feel like shedding real tears before the day was over. There was just one thing she decided she would do, and that was to keep a firm hold upon her temper, whatever the provocation.

"You danced, then?" Mrs. Eastman inquired, quite as if it were a torture to ask the question.

Libra nodded, and helped herself to cakes.

"If you knew you were going to dance, why did you not wear a white gown?"

"Had no more idea of dancing than I had of flying."

"But how came you to do such an indiscreet, improper thing?"

"Mamma, I should have danced if everybody in the world had been dead but the musicians and myself. I couldn't have helped it. I have heard good dance music, strains that made me forget there was anything but beauty and harmony in life, but I never before forgot everything and everybody."

"Your indiscretion is probably well circulated by this time."

"You would have been willing, mamma, for me to dance in a white gown?"

"Say, Elizabeth, you and mamma let up, won't you?"

There was a light in Libra's eyes that her brother was well acquainted with. It presaged a storm, and Dick, while not above stirring up a slight breeze, was not fond of a cyclone.

"Indiscretion?" repeated Libra. The word seemed to madden her.

"That's the term you used about poor Betty Sinclair when she ran away and got married, and about your maid when she did worse. I am classed in the same company for forgetting the color of my gown."

"But you know how people talk, Elizabeth," said Dick. "Honor bright, if I had thought about the dress I would not have spoken about your dancing, but I didn't know what you had on. Of course, mother did know, and that's what's made the row. I thought she'd be pleased about Winterhead, for he's a splendid fellow, got lots of money, and one of the finest law practices in the city."

"Did you dance with him, Elizabeth?" Mrs. Eastman asked.

The weight in the scales of Libra changed again now. Tragedy went up and farce came down.

"Dance with him?" The girl laughed. "He would have waltzed with our black cook just as soon. No, I decorously promenaded with him, and was nearly turned into a pillar of ice by the cold breath of his lordship's displeasure."

"But I thought you had never met him before?" Mrs. Eastman interrogated.

"First and last time, mamma, but he is a very solid man, as Dick says, and he thinks just as much of appearances as you do. To tell the truth, there was one moment in our breezy flirtation—that's first-class, Dick—that I thought he had decided to tuck me under his tree-trunk of an arm and bear me to some distant spot, where he could teach me how to behave."

"Pity he hadn't," said the lady at the head of the table, "for you'll never learn in any other way—never."

"Then I am destined to continue a Hottentot, for no man on this earth will ever rule over me."

"That's right, Lib; don't you ever go back on that vow. I think I should want to leave the country if you ever married. Between my sorrow for you and my sympathy for my brother-in-law, life would be a beastly desolation."

"I cannot imagine a person by the name of Winterhead being rude or critical to any-

one," Mrs. Eastman remarked, in a more placid tone. "Your father knew the elder Winterhead very well, and I have met Mrs. Winterhead, and I think I have seen this very young man."

"Is he young, Dick?" Libra asked. "His manner was grandfatherly. Pooh! that man never had any youth."

"I think there is but this son," said Mrs. Eastman, "and he cannot possibly be over thirty. Mr. Winterhead married Grace Carnegie, splendid family and very aristocratic. They lived abroad the first dozen years or so."

"I wish they had stayed there," Libra broke in. Her mother had come to a pause, and those who did not know her fondness for genealogies and family trees might reasonably have supposed that she had said all she cared to on this subject. But her children knew better, and Libra, true child of the air that she was, invariably grew cross and restless when compelled to listen to stories of the past and details of family histories. A Libra native has slight reverence for antiquity,

and cares little to what or to whom the ease and grandeur of life owe their material origin. Is a friend rich? May continued prosperity attend him. But neither the grandfather nor the grandmother have part or lot in the matter. Is a friend poor? Is there not something that can be done for him—not next week or next month—but *now?* No people on the face of the earth fulfil more literally two at least of the Scriptural injunctions than these air people. They turn away from "endless genealogies" and they "take no thought of the morrow." To-day is pleasant enough or cloudy enough, and is all they can possibly manage. When the sun shines they expect it is always going to shine, and when clouds come they put in exercise every faculty they possess to dispel them. They may suffer intensely, but rarely if ever, no matter what the stress or the circumstances, lose sight of the fact that the sun is still shining, though they may not see it. Not only are these Libra people children of Hope, but they are children of knowledge. They know, but they do not know that they

know, and usually are brought to realization of their own native power and understanding only through mistakes and wanderings which would kill the spirit of the denizens of almost any other sign.

It was not an easy matter to lead Mrs. Eastman away from her favorite subject, but Libra's tact was sometimes too strong and subtle to be resisted. It was operative this time, but very disagreeably so, Dick thought.

Genealogy took a back seat, and petulance slipped into the vacant place.

"I don't know what will become of you, Elizabeth," the mother remarked. "Heaven knows I have cares enough without being worried every minute of the day and night about you. You find fault with every man you meet——"

"And why should I not?" Libra again interrupted. "What are men to me? What do you want me to do—bow down and worship them?"

"When I think how you treated poor Teddy Vanderwell——"

Libra and her brother exchanged glances,

and the former whispered, "Poor Teddy, sure enough."

"Who was so much in love with you that he came almost to suicide," the mother went on, "my blood boils. Look at the establishment you could have had, the houses, the diamonds, the opportunities for travel and culture——"

"And the fool Teddy with me day and night. No, I thank you."

"And now you are going to cut up in the same way with this young Winterhead. I see it just as plainly as if it were all mapped out in front of me."

"My prophetic soul! my mother!" laughed Libra, as she rose from the table; and then added, very seriously, her hand upon the knob of the door, "It would really be a very great favor and help to me, mamma, if you would not say these things. I don't like Mr. Winterhead, but I do resent your disposition of him."

"But, Elizabeth, if you are going to act like this all the time——"

Mrs. Eastman had the last word as usual,

but Libra, disrespectful and unkind though her behavior may seem to many, did not hear it. Mother and son were alone in the dining room.

"Why do you nag her so, mother?" the latter inquired. "She's got an awfully tender mouth, and you do saw away like all possessed. She'll bolt one of these days, and you'll be sitting alone in your buggy, allowing you're lucky enough not to have a smash-up."

"I expect she'll smash us all up. I never had a particle of sympathy from your father in this matter, and now when you're old enough to have some sense you are following right in his footsteps."

"Pretty rough on poor, old dad. Glad he isn't here to hear it," Dick thought, but he kissed his mother's cheek and escaped from the house without further dispute.

III.

"I just wish I could talk with God," said Libra to herself, when once more alone in her own room. There is nobody else, and I can't find Him. I wonder, if I went to some minister, if he could put me on the right track. Why, I cannot endure to feel all out in the cold this way. Of course any good minister could tell a person who was willing to be taught something that would be of use. I'll try it. That Mr. Harkness I heard preach the other evening talked as if he knew all about things. I'll go to him."

To will was to do, and a couple of hours later, Libra, looking like an angel that had strayed for a few moments from the heavenly fold, was shown into the minister's sombre library.

"I don't suppose real, true Christians need any external light to make them happy, but I should suffocate and die in this musty

hole," the visitor told herself as she waited for the minister to enter. "I suppose this marks the difference between a sinner and a Christian, but I believe I would rather be a sinner in the sunshine than a saint in the shadow. Pugh! how it smells!"

The clerical gentleman was large, portly, middle-aged, clean-shaven, handsome, and immaculately attired. He seemed the very personification of good-nature, a man that one would expect to find at his best at a choice dinner party. The man and his library were not related to each other. This was Libra's first thought, and it proved to be a correct one.

"It will be pleasanter in the back parlor," the host remarked after the first formal greeting was over, and then arose and led the way to this apartment.

"It didn't seem to me that you belonged in that room," Libra remarked, quite as if her companion were not a minister, and quite as if she had known him all the days of her life.

This is always the way with the Libras.

"I regard that as a compliment," her companion remarked. "The fact is, I am compelled to go there occasionally for books of reference, but there are so many books, and my housekeeper is so exasperatingly neat, that I have yielded to her determination to exclude the dust as far as possible."

"I hate to dust books, and I hate to see anybody else do it, but it is mortifying, is it not, to have a caller pick up a volume and then try to dust her gloves without your seeing her. I think, Mr. Harkness," she added thoughtfully, "that after a while books will be differently put together, or perhaps we'll have automatic dusting machines attached to them. We are certainly living in a great age."

The minister was evidently much amused and entertained, though secretly wondering what was the object of this beautiful and certainly brilliant young woman in calling upon him.

She did not leave him long in doubt.

"Mr. Harkness," she said, leaning a little forward as she spoke, "I heard you preach

a very fine sermon a while ago, and it seemed to me that you were sufficiently acquainted with life, death, and the great hereafter, as the poet says, to give me some practical working-points. Theologically, I haven't a foot to stand on, and I am just as badly off when it comes to philosophy."

The social smile faded from the minister's face, and his eyes seemed suddenly filled with care and disquiet. He swiftly recognized that this was not the charming butterfly he had at first thought her, who had come in to make arrangements, perhaps, for a church fair, a lecture, or a friend's wedding, but a hungry soul in search of the bread of life, and his sad expression was but the out-picturing of the thought, the stern realization that he had no bread to give her.

Libra understood this at once, but, Libra-like, would not admit the correctness of her impression.

This man had some imagination, and he had frequently speculated as to what he should do in an emergency of this sort. Most of the people he met were satisfied with

generalities—perhaps he called them husks, in his heart—but this fair girl with the spiritual gray eyes and the longing expression was not one of these. She had come to demand a reason for the faith that was in him.

"Miss Eastman," he said after a little pause, "I can think of no greater happiness than to serve one so much in earnest as yourself. Tell me frankly what you think I can do for you."

"I have reasoned something in this wise," Libra replied. "You are called—I suppose that is the way you put it—to preach the gospel to the heathen, those who sit in darkness. I'm a heathen, but perhaps a trifle different from some of my benighted brothers and sisters in the fact that the ordinary sermon, instead of satisfying me, instead of answering my questions, starts many more, and the last state is really worse than the first. But I am not going to take up much of your time to-day, or bother you with my spiritual conundrums. I simply want to know where your God is located and how I can find Him."

"Simply?"

Surely this theological scholar and popular minister of the so-called gospel can be pardoned the irresistible smile which changed for the moment his face from grave to gay, from the tragic to the humorous.

"But it isn't a bit funny," said Libra, who could read more in a smile than in the spoken word.

"No, it is not," said her companion, struggling for composure, "but your way of demanding an answer to the hardest question that man has ever formulated, and the ease with which you thought I could answer it, really had an element of the ludicrous in it," and now the smile broadened again.

"Pardon me, Miss Eastman, but it is an absolute fact that we ministers sometimes see a joke."

Libra shook her head.

"I truly thought it would be easy," she said. "Why is it not?"

"Because each human soul interprets God differently——"

"But, Mr. Harkness, there can be but one

right way of interpreting Him," the girl interrupted, "and that is what I want—the right way."

"What is your idea of God?"

"Oh, I have had a thousand conceptions, but every one has failed to satisfy me. I need a God that is a Father, a tender, affectionate parent, who will answer when I speak to Him, and who will hold me so close that I can never be cross nor sinful, never slip nor stumble. Excuse me, Mr. Harkness, but you told your people of just such a God as this that evening I heard you preach."

"I believe that we have just such a Father, and I also believe that we must all find Him for ourselves. 'Who by searching can find out God?' No man."

"But doesn't that mean that God is such an imminent, omnipresent power in the universe that it is a waste of time and force to search after Him? He is always with us, but where, and how can we understand?"

"We are told that in God we live and move and have our being. Can you not grasp this thought and make it your own?"

"That statement has been made to me so often, Mr. Harkness, that, like the actor's lines after a long run, they mean nothing. Do you think God sends pain to His children, and sorrow and poverty and death?"

It was a very eager pair of eyes that looked into the sympathetic ones opposite, and the minister hated to speak.

"Yes, I think He does," he replied. "I don't see any other way to account for these evils."

"What does He send them for?"

"Discipline and development, I firmly believe."

"But it doesn't work, Mr. Harkness, and if you have observed you must admit this. Why, pain would make a perfect demon of me. I despise pain and sickness, and I abhor death."

The minister had looked into a good many odd books and magazines, and naturally concluded that his visitor had been imbibing some radical sentiments, and was not so much shocked as some other men in his position might have been.

"One of my most intelligent parishioners said something like this to me the other day," he remarked pleasantly, "and I found she had been attending some very remarkable lectures—occult or scientific or something of that sort. You probably have had the same experience."

"Oh, no," said Libra sadly. "I don't know anything about occultism, or any other ism. I do know that people seem to be thinking on more independent lines than ever before, and one is not now burned at the stake because he disagrees with some especial creed. It seems hopeful—don't you think so?"

"Yes, Miss Eastman, I think it is, but we should be careful not to go too far."

This was a bit of advice of which he felt that his visitor stood in sad need.

"But if one had the truth, Mr. Harkness, one could never go astray. There must be a fundamental truth somewhere, but as long as it is so hidden that no one can get hold of it, the responsibility is not ours. I am going to try a little longer to find it, and if I don't succeed I shall stop for all time."

The girl had risen as she spoke, and now held out her hand to her host, who was about as dazed and disturbed as a man could well be.

"You have been very honest with me," she added, "and I thank you for that."

"I wish I could answer all your questions, and dismiss all your fears, but God alone can perform that work."

"And you cannot tell me where to find Him?"

Libra's eyes were very sorrowful and reproachful, and her companion, touched by the wing of her pure spirit, her divine desire, felt a strange stirring within him, a kind of warmth and inspiration which he had never known before. This is the mission of these dear ones of the air, and is it not pitiful that they so seldom understand their power?

"Let me say just this to you, my friend," the gentleman resumed earnestly. "We must all find our God in here," placing his hand upon his breast, "and not up there," pointing above. "I recognize God in you

this very moment, and I feel Him in myself. It is not lo! here, and lo! there, for the kingdom of heaven is within you."

Libra drew a long breath.

"There is something in that," she said positively.

"You are right," her companion responded. Mr. Harkness had repeated these very words times without number, but he knew it was the first time that he had ever adequately grasped their meaning. What was the reason of this? The minister knew nothing of vibratory law. If he had he would have understood that something had been set swinging which would never stop; a beautiful, purposeful, strong vibration, that in turn would act upon other elements of the substance ether, and so on and on and on.

When the guest had departed, our theologian, whose book knowledge satisfied the surface thinker, but which was useless for the real seeker after truth, and which, to do him credit, he rarely attempted to elaborate in private, walked slowly back to the parlor.

"There is a wonderful power about that

girl," he told himself. "What a strange interview! I believe it has done more for me than it has for her. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings! She certainly has the artlessness of a child, but each time I looked into her eyes she seemed to me like an old soul. I wonder if there is anything in that theory of reincarnation? That word would make a stir used in the pulpit. Go slow, my friend, go slow," and the reverend gentleman walked briskly into the library, opened the windows wide, and threw back the blinds.

"Dust or no dust," he exclaimed, "I'll let some of God's air and sunshine into this musty place," and as he spoke he was intuitively aware that a ray of spiritual light had been let into his own darkened consciousness, and because of this he was no longer on friendly terms with shadows.

Strange result from half an hour's interview with a girl, who had never studied theology, who had never experienced what is called religion, and who had come to him simply for a word of comfort and advice. But so it was, and our friend accepted the

fact, though only dimly comprehending it, and was wise in his generation.

Libra took no credit to herself for the uplift of the last moments of her call.

"He's nice and clean," she thought, "and though he isn't very deep he's not a hypocrite. He knew at once that he hadn't anything to appease my appetite, and didn't try to fill me up on husks. That last thing he said really gave me a lift. I guess it was the way he said it. He seemed to feel it all through him. I wish I could find somebody who could explain to me the meaning of these subtle thrills—the warm ones—that begin in the bosom and radiate to every part of the body. It seems almost as if that might be God's love shed abroad in the heart. It began to burn just before he placed his hand upon his breast and it hasn't stopped glowing yet. Would it be possible to find any one who could tell me what this warmth means?"

Poor Libra was seeking for revelations outside of herself.

IV.

HORACE WINTERHEAD possessed what would be called, by those who are esteemed practical and in the full ownership of common sense, a well-regulated mind. In the hours of business he attended to business, and it needed no placard on the wall of his office to bring people to an understanding of this fact. One glance at his resolute face was enough to settle quickly and permanently the most garrulous of advertising agents. He was sometimes accused of looking glum and disagreeable, and not infrequently of being disagreeable on the occasion of business interruption.

Up to this time in the career of our friend, business and sentiment had been as distinct as life and death, light and darkness, but now, very much to his annoyance, he frequently found his thought straying from cases and clients to the fair girl with whom

he had had so charming and unique an interview. This mental wandering, he told himself, must be instantly stopped. It was entirely legitimate for a man to think of a woman in his hours of leisure and relaxation, but at no other time. A man was a fool who allowed the thought of a girl to disturb his occupation or his sleep.

It was a week after this memorable meeting, and one night at dinner Horace asked his father some questions about the standing and resources of the Eastman family.

"Pretty creature—the daughter—" said Mrs. Winterhead before her husband could answer.

"Where did you ever see her?" Capricorn inquired.

"I heard her play twice at the lunatic asylum."

"The lunatic asylum?" exclaimed her son, in horror and disgust.

"I am on the entertainment committee for the hospital," said the lady calmly, "and I can assure you we esteem it a great favor when we can get such a beautiful and tal-

ented young woman as Miss Eastman to help us."

"Father, I should think you would put a stop to such things," said Capricorn, with flashing eyes.

Mr. Winterhead was evidently much amused, for he laughed heartily.

"Your mother has had her way ever since the first day we were married, and this she will continue to have the rest of the journey, for I have found that her way is a good deal better than mine. She wasn't cut out for a lunatic, and lunatics can't hurt her."

"It is just as well that your father never tried to fit a curb bit to my mouth, Horace, and if you ever marry it will be just as well if you don't," said the lady.

Mrs. Winterhead was a Sagittarius native, and her husband a Pisces. Those familiar with these signs will understand their position toward each other.

"Well, my wife will never figure in lunatic asylums," said Capricorn.

"She sings like an angel, and plays with

perfect taste," Mrs. Winterhead resumed, "and she always does the poor creatures a world of good. They are perfectly gentle with her. The other day the doctor brought down two very violent patients, and I declare if one of them didn't go to sleep, and the other one, who had screamed and shrieked for hours, calmed down, folded her hands, and smiled at the musician as though she had been an angel just descended from heaven."

Sagittarius is the archer, and when the archer gets ready to shoot he usually hits the mark.

"I think Eastman left his family well provided for," the elder Winterhead broke in. "He was one of the finest men I ever met."

"Do you know Mrs. Eastman, mother?" Horace inquired.

"I know that she is not related to her daughter except by blood, and that doesn't count for much in this instance."

"You mean that they don't get on well together?"

"I don't go so far as that, but I am not able to see how they can. Excuse the term, but, from what I have heard of Mrs. Eastman I should judge she was not very amiable. I like the daughter better every time I see her."

"It is considerable of a responsibility, my dear, to be left with the care of a son and a daughter," said Mr. Winterhead, "and it may be that Mrs. Eastman has things to combat and worry about that her neighbors are not aware of."

Capricorn thought of the waltz in the black gown and concluded she might have. But he said nothing. All Capricorn people look very far ahead. Unconventional and even lax as our Capricorn considered his mother in her social observances, she might be shocked by so radical a deviation from propriety, and have something disagreeable to remember of the girl that it was not at all impossible would be a member of the Winterhead family at some future time.

"George," said Mrs. Winterhead to her husband, when they were alone a few mo-

ments later, "I wouldn't have Horace marry that girl for a million dollars."

"Why, mother!" her companion exclaimed.

"If I thought she was getting in love with him I believe I would warn her."

"What under the sun would you warn her against? Tell her to beware of a fellow that is as clean as a whistle, hasn't a bad habit in the world, cultured, handsome, and independent? I rather think I shall have to stop your going to lunatic asylums."

Mrs. Winterhead smiled, but her heart was troubled. This son was her only child and the very apple of her eye, but from his earliest boyhood she had been aware of his arrogant disposition. He was totally unlike herself or her husband, or any other member of the family on either side that she knew anything about. There was no heredity here, she often told herself.

"Horace is a splendid fellow," she replied, "and I am as proud of his cleanliness and his culture and his good looks as you are. But he can never make happy such a girl as Eliza-

beth Eastman; and isn't it strange? By the very law of contraries he will doubtless be attracted to her."

"Horace could never be anything but a gentleman," said Mr. Winterhead thoughtfully.

"He would be perfect if his wife did exactly as he wished and never as she liked. Ah, my dear, I have been intimately acquainted with that young man for a number of years, and I hope he never will marry unless he can find a girl so perfectly individualized as to be a match for him. Such young women are exceedingly rare. And then they'd fight, and we should wish we had never been born."

"Not necessarily. The right girl would probably give him a taste of her quality before marriage, and he would be obliged to take her with the understanding that her rights were not to be interfered with."

"Elizabeth Eastman could never take such a stand before or after. She would probably cry herself to death. I think Horace is going to call at the Eastmans' this evening. He hasn't said so, but I strongly suspect it."

The mother's intuitions were correct. A day or two before, Capricorn had dined with Dick Eastman at the club, and an invitation had been received and accepted for this occasion. Dick knew it was an at-home night, and so had said nothing to either mother or sister. The latter would certainly have an engagement, he knew, if she had the slightest suspicion of such an intention. He would spring it on them when it was too late for Elizabeth to make other arrangements.

After dinner he found a moment in which to say to his mother privately:

"Say, I met Winterhead the other day, and asked him to come round some evening, and I shouldn't be surprised if he dropped in to-night."

"Mercy me!" said the lady, "and Elizabeth has got on that old white silk gown. I wonder if I had better tell her to change it."

"Tell her nothing," said Dick.

Then Libra came in, looking so dainty and ethereal that Dick wondered what his mother could have meant by "old gown."

"She'll do him up to-night, poor chap," he thought. "It's a strange thing that we should walk right into each other that day, when I don't think we ever met before on the street. I suppose Elizabeth will blame me for this, but upon my soul I'm as innocent as a baby. Perhaps I should have told her that he was coming. I'll be hanged if two such high-strung women as mother and Elizabeth are not enough to drive a man crazy. I've a good mind to go out. What in thunder shall I do?"

"What's on for this evening, Dick?" Libra inquired, as she looked over a pile of music upon the piano.

"Thunder and lightning for all I know," was the grim answer.

"I wasn't thinking of the weather," said his sister. "I meant to ask where you were going."

"What's the matter with my staying at home? It's a little unusual, I admit, but I thought I'd like to have a look at your freaks to-night."

"I think it's about time you consigned that

gown to the rag-bag, Elizabeth," Mrs. Eastman broke in, "or gave it away to somebody. It's dreadfully wrinkled. I wish you'd run up and change it. You have plenty of time before anybody comes."

Libra turned and looked searchingly at her mother and brother, but the glance was not noticed.

"Who is coming to-night?" she asked.

There was a moment's pause, and then she repeated the question in a little different form.

"What particular individual are you expecting this evening upon whom you are anxious to have me make an impression? I know who it is," she added. "It's that Winterhead. I'll take your advice, mamma, and go up-stairs and change my gown for my *robe de nuit*."

"Elizabeth Eastman, if you do this thing I will never forgive you," her mother exclaimed, rising in hot haste.

A moment's hesitation and Libra was lost. Visitors were announced, and the girl, quivering with anger at the thought of the de-

ception that had been practised upon her, was compelled to receive her friends. Mrs. Eastman drew a long breath of relief. The battle was won, and what came afterward could be managed easily enough.

Dick felt like kicking the furniture.

What was the reason, he asked himself, that he was constantly in trouble with one or the other of these near relatives? He desired to please them—of course he did, for Dick was a Gemini—but he never could succeed with both at the same time, try as hard as he might. Women were strange creatures, unreasonable and inexplicable. He almost laughed aloud, miserable as he was, to think what a retriever Libra would have made if she were only a dog.

"There never was such a keen scent in woman or beast," he thought, "and mother! she suspects and imagines enough, goodness knows, but she's seldom right. I'd give a year or two of my valuable life to understand the cause of this difference."

In the mean time everything to the superficial seemed as serene and rose-colored as

usual in this tasteful and luxurious home. One friend after another dropped in, and at last, about nine o'clock, Capricorn was announced. Dick gave a low whistle as he took in with one swift glance the manly, handsome, and unexceptionable appearance of the new-comer.

"A god and a goddess," he thought. Then he watched his sister as she gracefully took the hand of her guest and smiled upon him, as though of all her acquaintances he was the most welcome. "Sometimes I think Elizabeth is a flirt, and then again I don't know," proceeded Dick; "but she's up to mischief to-night anyway."

After a while Libra played for her guests, and Capricorn, who had been making himself agreeable to Mrs. Eastman, leaned back in his chair and gave himself up to the charm of the music. It was brilliant, it was tender, it was faultless, and the critical and appreciative listener noted all the unusual points, from the graceful, unstudied pose of the performer to the apparently effortless manipulation of the keys.

In everything but music the native of the middle sign of the air triplicity is apt to be self-conscious, but a musical Libra is aware of nothing but the spiritual impression of harmony, whether playing or listening. The singular part of this nature, and one which seems very contradictory, is that these people can bear only just so much "sweet sound." They weary of a long concert, however fine, and if obliged to remain, when once the point of satiety is reached, they become nervous, irritable, and dejected. They have touched the other pole of pleasure, which is pain. This sensitiveness is more or less true of all air people, and is frequently noticed among the denizens of the fire domain. But to Libra, it seemed given in a superlative degree.

On this occasion the really-inspired performer rose from the piano, and to all entreaties for this or that favorite made the same smiling answer:

"I really cannot play any more."

There was a vacant chair beside Capricorn, and Libra, by some power of attraction

which was as new as it was unique, went straight to it.

"I think I never enjoyed any music as I have yours," her companion said simply.

"And you hear good music often?" Libra inquired.

"The best that there is."

"And you know good music when you hear it?" the girl continued, in that *naïve* and natural manner which is so fascinating to most men.

"I think I am a fair judge."

"Then thank you very much. Do you play or sing?"

"I manage a respectable bass, I am told."

"I'm glad it isn't tenor."

"Why?"

Capricorn was pleased at the implied compliment, and curious as to what she could mean.

"Well, because most tenors — there are some splendid exceptions, of course — are just musical dudes and nothing else. They expect everybody to rise and make obei-

sance whenever they appear. To oblige some friends who were giving a *musicale* not long ago, and who were disappointed in their accompanist, I played for one of these, and what do you think? Because I did my very best, he accused me of composing as I went along, in order to call attention to myself."

"No wonder you dislike them," said Capricorn drily. "This one was certainly both impolite and ungrateful. Of course you will never play for him again?"

"Not with his consent, but I think I should rather enjoy doing so. If he could find himself after the first few bars, then I am mistaken."

Mrs. Eastman's heart was filled with joy as she listened to the merry laughter which now and then came from the corner of the room where her daughter and the star guest were so unmistakably enjoying themselves.

Dick, at a little gesture from his mother, which said quite as plainly as words—"Make yourself as agreeable as possible, so that Elizabeth may remain undisturbed to

weave her pretty web"—played the part of host to perfection. But to do the young man justice, he didn't like it, and there was a premonition of danger in his heart which he could not reason away. "Can it be possible," he queried, "that out of this act of deception will come a lot of things which will bring trouble to the whole of us?" He had not thought for a long time of his old copy-book lesson, "Honesty is the best policy," but to-night he knew just how the letters looked that used to be so perplexing to form. "I won't touch a bonbon to-night, nor even a wafer," he at last decided. "This must be dyspepsia. Everybody is warped and nervous and imaginative when they have that."

In the mean time Capricorn and Libra were still pleasantly chatting.

"I know you play my favorite sonata," said the former, as some of the guests showed signs of departure. "Will you oblige me? I am sure it will be a great pleasure to all your friends."

"Not to-night," was the decided answer;

and then, in a voice and manner of incomparable sweetness, "when you come again, Mr. Winterhead."

The color came to Capricorn's dark cheeks, and there was a light in his eyes that flashed into his companion's, and she was again aware of a power in this man different from anything she had ever experienced. It was bewildering, and very, very agreeable—but—but what? Libra could not have analyzed this impression had her life depended upon it. It seemed to her like something heavy. "He is stronger than other men, more masterful. I believe he would take good care of the woman he loved," she told herself.

Dangerous ground, but even birds which fly high often come fatally near the snare of the fowler.

Capricorn was a wise man. A little concluding chat with the mother, and a cordial word to the brother, and he took his leave. Mrs. Eastman named the evening when they might be found at home, and Libra seemed to nod assent.

"I guess I'll take a walk and a smoke," Dick remarked, as the last guest departed.

"You must have had a very stupid evening," said Libra. "You didn't seem to enjoy my freaks."

"When a fellow finds that he is the only freak in the lot, it is pretty hard lines. That was my case," the young man replied, with strange seriousness.

"Never mind, Dickie, dear," said his sister, taking his face in her hands and kissing each cheek. "You meant well, and I forgive you. Truly, it wasn't half bad, and I think I am rather indebted to you than otherwise; still——"

"'Honesty is the best policy,'" Dick interrupted. "Hang that copy-book."

A moment later the front door closed, and Dick was tearing down the street.

"Queer world," thought Libra, as she bade her mother good-night.

"If I were in your place, Elizabeth, I would have another white silk made precisely like this one," said Mrs. Eastman. "There is something about those lines——"

"Yes, mamma."

"And I think you were right about those sleeves."

"Yes, mamma. Good-night."

"She is just as much taken with him as he is with her," was the mother's mental observation, as she closed her chamber door. "And such a splendid family!"

V.

LIBRA was in no sense a society girl. This was a great grief to her mother, and had been a great joy, though a constantly suppressed one, to her father. The only hope of the former was that this brilliant and indifferent creature would marry a man whose position was so high and assured that the obligations of social life would be forced upon her.

For two or three weeks after the first visit of Capricorn, his name had scarcely been mentioned by the family. Mrs. Eastman watched the situation narrowly, and was so well pleased with the progress of affairs that she felt no necessity for comment of any sort. Dick's apprehensions had become a little dimmed, though now and then, as he noticed the increasing intimacy of his sister and Winterhead, he felt sharp twinges of the old anxiety. Over and over again he

enumerated the good qualities of this man, who he knew had fully decided to have his will in this little family of three. But some way it didn't satisfy him entirely to be able to bear testimony to himself of the suitor's honesty, business ability, and, social standing. Everything was in Capricorn's favor, and Dick personally liked him. But marrying his sister was quite a different matter, and Dick wondered if he would not have about the same feelings toward any other usurper, however unexceptionable.

One afternoon, after a drive in the Park with Capricorn, Libra remarked to her mother in the most matter-of-fact manner possible: "I suppose you will receive a call from Mr. Winterhead this evening. I have promised to marry him."

Dick was reading the evening paper, and as these strange words in a strange tone fell from his sister's lips, he jumped from his chair, and, crumpling the sheet in both hands, threw it across the room.

"Richard!" exclaimed Mrs. Eastman.

"Dickie, dear, what is the matter?" Libra inquired.

"Matter enough," was the impetuous answer. "That's what I call fresh. It isn't two months, no, nor six weeks, since he first called here, and now you walk in with this piece of news! And the way you tell it, too. I've known you to come in lots of times and announce the purchase of a new gown or hat with a thousand times more enthusiasm."

"Say, Dick, if papa were here he would laugh louder and longer than he ever did in his life. Just think, for years I have been scolded, yes, literally abused, for my hoity-toityness, and now when I announce my engagement to a man of your and mamma's choice, in a decorous and practical manner, as befits the occasion, you scold me for that."

"Oh, Dick was surprised, that's all," Mrs. Eastman remarked. "And it is rather sudden. We have had no means of knowing that you were in the least fond of him."

"*Are* you fond of him, Elizabeth? Do you really care enough for this man to marry him?"

Dick's whole soul was in his face, and he went close to his sister and looked straight into her eyes.

"Why, how should I know if I care enough to marry him," the girl replied. "I have never had any experience in loving, you know. I can tell better afterward, I guess."

"Elizabeth, do try and show a little common sense once in your life," said Mrs. Eastman. "Dick has evidently parted with his."

"Why, I thought I had a lot of it," said Libra. "Here I have been getting myself engaged because I knew it was expected of me——"

"Who expected it?" Dick interrupted, with a growl.

"Oh, the world in general. Of course, just between us, I don't mind saying that as far as my preferences are concerned, *I* don't feel much leaning toward marriage, but as long as I must be united, as they call it, to somebody, Mr. Winterhead fills the bill as well as anybody. He is handsome, agreeable, and rich——"

"And he loves the very ground you walk

on, Elizabeth," Mrs. Eastman put in. "I've watched him."

Libra laughed.

"You are mistaken, mamma. Mr. Winterhead is the most unsentimental man I ever met. But I hate sentimentality, anyway."

As the girl spoke, she had picked up Dick's paper and straightened it out. Now she offered it to him, and at the same time presented her lips for a kiss.

"Blessed Dickie," she said. "Don't let's mind it. I've got to be united to somebody, because it's awful to be an old maid, and you've got to be united to somebody——"

"I'll be——"

The completion of this sentence was not heard. Dick vanished from the sitting-room, and up-stairs in his own chamber, behind closed doors, fought the battle out with himself.

"This is cheerful," said Libra.

"What in the world can be the matter with Richard?" Mrs. Eastman speculated. "I never knew him to behave so."

"Perhaps he knows something about Mr. Winterhead that he does not like to tell," suggested Libra.

The girl knew better, but her mother's complacency was almost more than she could bear.

"It is nothing under the sun but selfishness. Home will not be quite so lively after you are gone. If he had seen a girl that he loved, do you think any thought of us would have deterred him from engaging himself? No, indeed, I know men."

This was an exceedingly tactless remark, but Libra was in no mood to take it up. But it made a deep impression, and hours afterward in the silence of her own room she wondered and wondered how mothers, who claimed to be so well acquainted with the selfishness of men, could ever permit their daughters to marry if they could help it.

Much to the maternal discomfiture, Libra refused to see her lover after the interview.

"I will send for you when it is all over, dear," said Mrs. Eastman tenderly, "and if

I were you, I would wear that lovely black——"

"I'm not coming down, mamma," the girl replied.

"Not coming down? Surely, Elizabeth, you are joking!"

"I'm in dead earnest."

"But, Elizabeth, nobody ever heard of such a thing," protested the lady. "What will he think? What shall I say to him?"

"I don't think I care in the very least what you say, if you don't cause him to think that my failure to appear comes from maidenly coyness, and I hope you will not let him go away with any such impression. Upon my word, mamma,"—as Mrs. Eastman was about to break in with another protest—"I believe if I were to to see that man after he had talked with you, I should take back every word I have said. I am almost ready to as it is."

No stronger argument than this could possibly have been presented.

"She is quite capable of just such a caper," the elder lady told herself, and that settled it.

Libra will never forget that evening. She heard the bell that announced the appearance of the visitor, heard the hall door open and close, and, with her lively imagination stimulated to the utmost, saw the greeting and the seating and all the preparatory arrangements for this interview, which was to seal her fate forever. Her face flushed as she thought of her mother's satisfaction, which could not fail to be evident to any one of ordinary observation, and Capricorn's power of seeing everything was extraordinary, the excited girl reflected. Well, it was some satisfaction that she had not appeared overjoyed at the discovery of this man's desire to marry her.

"You cannot fail to know my feeling for you, Miss Eastman," Capricorn had said, and Libra simply looked an answer, as Libra women understand so well how to do.

"You need some one, dear Miss Eastman, to take care of you," was the next statement, "and I am sure that I can make you very happy."

"You thought the first time you saw me

that I needed a guardian," said Libra, "and I suppose that idea will be everlastingly perpetuated."

"I want you for my very own," the young man answered, "and this is the first time in my life that I have ever cared for a woman. I wish you could tell me that you cared for me."

"I like you very much," the girl responded, "but I have never loved anybody either, and I haven't the slightest idea what it is like. I have always fancied, though, that it must be overpowering;" and then she added archly, after a moment's pause, "and this isn't."

"I am glad to hear you say so," Capricorn replied. "I always distrust the overpowering. True love is steady and steadfast. It isn't an impetuous and ephemeral passion, that blazes up now and then, and finally flickers out. The right kind of love endures."

Libra thought of her own natural impetuosity and her tendency to detest to-day the thing she cared for yesterday, and concluded

that Capricorn was speaking words of common sense, and that her best plan was to plant her feet upon this solid rock of principle, and stay there. She felt that she and common sense were strangers, and that it was about time they made acquaintance, considering that everybody was obliged to come to it some time or another. What was the use of fooling round a few years longer? Marriage was inevitable, and where could there be found a man so eligible in every respect as this one?

So it came to pass that when Capricorn asked if he might speak to her mother, an immediate consent was given.

Now, as she heard with her spiritual hearing the conversation below, sometimes putting her hands over her ears in the endeavor to shut out this psychic knowledge of what was passing, she was more than once tempted to rush down to the library and put an end to the whole matter.

"Will I ever, ever, ever act like other girls, feel like other girls, be like other girls?" she queried. "Never, in all the

boundless ages of eternity. I have no stamina, no understanding, no balance."

Ah, Libra! how far astray she was that wretched night. What if some kind angel could have told her that in her fair hands were placed the scales of the universe, and that she not only had it in her power to make them hang evenly, but that neither peace nor lasting happiness could be hers until they were adjusted—would she have trusted the communication, and gone to work in earnest? There is no doubt of it, for Libra women have a habit of believing, and are usually obedient to the heavenly vision. But even angels are powerless in crises of this kind. Libra had turned her eyes from the sky to the earth, and there is no hope for those in this domain until they lift them again and recognize their home and their God.

Hearken, all ye October women. The scales of justice have been given to you, and some time, somewhere, you must attain the spiritual poise that shall mark the absolute, unerring balance, and when you do your

power is a weighty one. But until you begin to comprehend this truth, you are as capricious and unreliable as the clouds in your native element. The heights are yours, and by abiding upon them all things are possible to you.

The evening and the night wore away, as all evenings and all nights are sure to do. Libra went to sleep at last, and as usual fell to dreaming. She thought it was necessary for her to enter some large and beautiful building, but that the great door was closed. She tried it, and it was locked.

"You must go in," a sweet voice at her side whispered.

"But how can I?" Libra inquired impatiently. "This is the only entrance, and it is barred and bolted."

"You must step across that threshold," her unseen companion insisted.

"But what is there for me in that house?" the dreamer inquired.

"Light and life," was the sweet and impressive response.

Suddenly one of the verses that the girl

had learned in Sunday school occurred to her, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," and turning in the direction of the sweet, commanding voice, she said:

"Perhaps if I knock——"

There was no answer save a happy laugh, which grew less and less distinct, until it seemed to float away into infinite space. Then Libra knew she was alone.

"Light and life," she whispered. "Oh! how I want the light! When one has light one has understanding, and life is love."

In dreamland this child of the clear, pure air knew the whole secret and meaning of life.

For a moment or two she stood thoughtful, but not irresolute. Then she slowly lifted her hand and very timidly knocked upon the door. This was followed by a strange and subtle vibration, which appeared to the dreamer to come from the very heart of God. There was a warmth and a glow in her bosom never before experienced, and which seemed to relate her to all the sweet and friendly forces of the universe. But the

strangest part of this vision was, that, while she had time to note and enjoy these remarkable sensations, the door rolled back, and her father appeared on the threshold—her own father, dearer to her than all the world beside. His face was grave and tender, and his loving eyes smiled upon her as they had always done. He spoke no word, but seemed to gaze into her very soul. Even in her dream, Libra wondered why she did not rush into those arms that had always been open and ready to receive her, and then the radiant figure stepped one side, and she knew she was to enter the house. Having crossed the great portal, all idea of a house vanished. There was warmth and light and music and color; and color seemed to sing, and music to shine. There was no canopy but the stars, and so near did she feel to these great suns that it seemed as if she must be in the very heart of inter-stellar space.

For a moment she had forgotten her father, and when she turned to look for him he was not there, and then all the glories by

which she was surrounded faded into a soft white mist, and Libra was alone and—awake.

"Why did not my father speak to me?" she asked, in her longing love.

"Why did he not speak to me in this, the first real crisis of my life? Why did he not advise me, when I need it so much? Just one word," she cried. "Come back! oh, dearest one, come back, and say just one word, only one! I will ask no more."

But there was no response. Then the anxious spirit endeavored to analyze the expression of the face of the vision, and draw from it some hint that would guide her in what she now felt to be an awful emergency.

The face of the Sphinx could have been as easily interpreted.

"He smiled and he looked sad," she thought, "but how could he fail to look sad when he must again go away from me? And yet it was not like my father to leave me in the dark like this. Once he would have told me exactly what to do, and I should have done it."

Then a singular thought took possession of the girl's mind. She recalled the fact that at the moment of her knock upon the door her father appeared. He did not come from a distance to open the door. He was right on the spot, showing that he waited her summons.

"I believe it means God," she said, after a while, her eyes heavy with tears. "It was just a picture, a beautiful vision, arranged by some lovely angel, to show me that in my Father's house are many mansions, and that He is always close to His children, and ready to give them all that they need or want. Oh, what shall I do with this vision —how shall I interpret it? If only some wise one would tell me."

More lessons to learn, and so with all in this domain who look to others for advice.

VI.

It did not take long for Libra to find out that the speculative realm in which she had spent the larger part of her young life was not only not agreeable to the man she had promised to marry, but that he really had serious objections to the discussion of any subject that even bordered upon the metaphysical or spiritual. Through the processes of evolution we were here upon this planet, and the wise man was the one who extracted the most comfort and happiness from his environment. What was beyond, if any thing, Capricorn did not know nor care. When the time came to die he would probably have had enough of living, and would be glad of a rest.

Such remarks, brought out by occasional questions or suggestions on the part of Libra, distressed and repelled her. There was no

possible way by which she could understand the workings of such a mind.

"But, Horace," she once asked—nobody will ever realize what a struggle it was to call this dignified and self-contained man by his given name—"suppose I were to die. You tell me that you love me—would you not want to meet me again?"

It took considerable courage and will to carry the point as far as this, but Libra desired above all things to find some point of agreement in a matter so vital to her.

"I don't believe it would take much to make you a Spiritualist," Capricorn replied. "But can't you see, Elizabeth, that you have nothing to build upon in your speculations about another place of existence?"

"But that is not answering my question," his companion replied, an infinite longing in her tender gray eyes.

"I really think I could stand the tediousness of the eternity part of it, if we could be together, my beautiful darling," he answered with real feeling. "I do wish you wouldn't think about these things," he continued.

"Such subjects make people morbid and nervous and timid. If we are to keep on living, we shall keep on; that's all. But we'll keep on loving anyway."

One evening not long after the engagement had been made public, Mr. and Mrs. Winterhead came in quite informally, much to Mrs. Eastman's delight. Mrs. Winterhead had evidently chosen a night when she knew that her son had another engagement. This lady and Libra met like old friends, and it was not long before the conversation turned into channels which were always avoided when Capricorn was present. Among the many interesting things spoken of was the visit of one of Mr. Winterhead's intimate friends to a celebrated occultist; a man who told the domains and signs of his visitors without asking for the date of birth.

"The most wonderful thing about it all," said he, "was that my friend had a son in Calcutta doing, as his father supposed, a fine business. He did not mention this son, nor did he so much as think of him until the—the—whatever you call him——"

"Master is a good word," suggested Mrs. Winterhead.

"Until the master informed him that his son's business had gone to smash, and that he was on his way home."

"But how did he know this, and was it true?" Libra asked eagerly.

"Perfectly so," said Mr. Winterhead. "A week later the young man walked in unannounced, and he corroborated every word the strange man had said.

"Perhaps there was collusion," Mrs. Eastman suggested. "Of course these men must become possessed of a good many facts before they start in business."

The Winterheads smiled, and Libra knew that they had taken her mother's measure. This was the thing of all things most dreaded. The hot blood flew into her face, as it always did when such breaks were made in the presence of strangers.

Dick came bravely to the rescue.

"I went with some of the boys to a palmist the other night," he said, "and true as I live the fellow told me thing after thing that

had happened to me. He even went so far as to describe my home."

"How many hints did you give him?" Mrs. Eastman inquired, in her most superior manner.

"I never spoke," the young man replied. "He went on until he had finished, and then he didn't have interest enough to ask if I thought him correct."

"That proved faith in his own power—don't you think so?" said Libra.

"A scientific palmist makes very few mistakes," Mr. Winterhead remarked.

"Then you really think it a science?" Dick asked.

"I suspect it is as much of a science as that of mathematics," was the placid reply.

"What does your son think of such things?" Mrs. Eastman interrogated.

"Horace seems now to have faith only in the things that he can see and touch. At present he is of the earth, earthy, but he is young yet, and it is probably safe not to give too much attention to such subjects until we have a little maturity as a foundation."

These were diplomatic words, and Mrs. Winterhead was quite aware that Libra understood. Well, so much the better.

This good woman was much disturbed. It seemed as if she could not allow this intimacy to go on. Sometimes she felt as if it were her duty to acquaint Elizabeth with her reasons for believing that happiness would not result from a marriage with her son.

"But if they love each other, mother," Mr. Winterhead always remarked, "it is clearly none of your business. Love always takes care of its own. Never mind the seeming inequalities and differences of character and temperament. You will certainly burn your fingers and be the chief sufferer if you attempt any work of this kind. I've seen these things tried before."

Sometimes this seemed like common sense, and at other times like the most specious reasoning. But it had its effect, and the kind-hearted, conscientious mother kept her fingers out of the fire, though she would rather have burned them than not in a cause which seemed to her so sacred.

Strangely enough, or at least it would seem strange perhaps to most mothers, Mrs. Winterhead's first interest was for the girl. She intuitively understood her sensitiveness, her exquisite fineness of temperament, and was aware that, in the case of the unhappy marriage which seemed so probable, the woman would bear the brunt of the misery. Then, she naturally felt that her son was worthy of a better fate. A marital disappointment would be to him a deep disgrace, and the loving mother hoped and sometimes believed that time and experience would soften and mellow this otherwise faultless character.

As the weeks and months wore on, Libra and her prospective mother-in-law saw each other very often, but no note of warning had yet been struck. On one occasion Libra remarked, with a little forced laugh, which her companion knew presaged something disagreeable:

"I don't know what to do about playing for those poor creatures at the asylum."

"Have you another engagement?" the elder lady asked tactfully.

"Oh, no, but I find that Horace is very much opposed to my doing such things."

"Indeed?"

The head of the Sagittarius native was well thrown back, and her eyes snapped with anger. She had known her son's sentiments and intentions, but now she found that she was not at all prepared for his expression of them to this girl, who had always before felt at liberty to do whatever kind act she chose.

"Has he forbidden you to go to the asylum?" the speaker forced herself to ask in a somewhat different tone.

"Forbidden is perhaps rather too strong a word," Libra replied, "but he has gone so far as to tell me that he shall not allow such visits after we are married."

"What did you say to him?"

"Oh, Mrs. Winterhead, what could I say? What do girls generally say to such things?"

"Well, didn't you make any reply, or any protest, or try to reason the matter with him?"

"Not about this thing, but I have in some other cases, and it was such dreadfully hard work and seemed to stir up such inharmony that I either lost courage or grew wise—I don't know which. Which do you think it was?"

The crisis had precipitated itself at last, and now there was no sweet and pacific Pisces near to utter the warning word. Sagittarius had it all her own way. "I should be lacking in everything that makes a true woman if I did not tell this girl a few truths now," she said to herself, and so, after a little pause, in which she tried to smother her indignation, she asked quite calmly:

"Is it a pleasure to you to play for those people, Elizabeth?"

"Oh yes, a great pleasure; but, my dear Mrs. Winterhead, I do not see that my state of mind toward this subject has the slightest thing to do with it."

"I don't know that I quite follow you," her companion answered, with a new interest. "Just what do you mean?"

"I mean," said Libra, "that if it were a pain

to me to do this work, and my conscience approved it, I should still do it, if I were the only one concerned. I want you to see that I consider that Horace has no more jurisdiction over my duty than he has over my pleasure. The question is, has he in any case?"

Logic was the last thing that Mrs. Winterhead had expected from Libra, and she was both pleased and astonished.

"Well, what do you think about it?" the elder lady inquired, determined that the girl should express her honest opinion.

"I don't like it at all," and Libra shook her head sadly; "but when the Bible tells women that they must obey their husbands, it seems to me that a girl might as well begin to practise before marriage, in order to get used to it."

"St. Paul was a fervent Christian, and a man who intended to do the right thing by everybody, but if he be correctly reported, he is responsible for an incredible lot of namby-pamby, wishy-washy, weak-willed, no-account women!"

"Why, Mrs. Winterhead," exclaimed Li-

bra, "I never heard any one say such things before."

The girl's eyes were big with wonder, and she drew a little nearer her friend, in order not to lose a syllable of what might be on its way toward her enlightenment.

"Perhaps not, but it is time you did. Tell me, please, what do you value as your dearest possession? Think a moment," as Libra seemed a trifle mystified.

"Mrs. Winterhead," said the girl sadly, "I think I can say truly that what I most want is what I know myself to have the least of—individuality."

"That is just it, dear. It is the pearl of great price, and because women in the past have merged their individualities into those of their lovers and husbands, is no reason why they should keep on throwing themselves away!"

"Then you think——"

"Just so—that no human being should surrender himself or herself wholly to another."

"Then you think"—Libra was in a hurry for a specific expression of opinion.

"Yes, I think, Elizabeth, that Horace Winterhead has no more right to interfere with your playing when and where you please than has a total stranger. It is your business and none of his; and so with every question that may come up."

"I wonder what mamma would say if she had heard this!" said Libra.

"Her surrender was only in theory. I don't believe she ever gave up much," the lady responded, with a smile.

"True," said Libra, "papa did it all."

When Libra went home that long-to-be-remembered afternoon, she was full of plans for the preservation of her dignity and the evolution of her individuality on peace principles.

If she acted wisely, she could have her own way and not hurt or offend her lover. She knew she could.

Without peace, life was almost unendurable to Libra—it never could be quite so, however strong the stress—and deprived of her freedom she was simply a wild bird in a cage.

VII.

"Say, Lib, you are losing all your snap," Dick told his sister one evening, when they chanced to be by themselves.

"I never in all my life saw a girl change as you have, unless it was after marriage. I was counting up the girls I know who have married within the last two years—twenty odd—and with one or two exceptions they all look bored and disappointed. They are not even sociable any more."

"Perhaps they don't dare to be," Libra replied. "According to all that I can hear, we women after marriage are not the same beings at all that we were before."

"What in thunder do you suppose is the reason?" Dick asked.

"I'm disposed to think it comes from some past blunder, an awful long way back, but, Dickie, I don't believe that God Almighty had a single thing to do with it."

"How do you make that out? I thought, if there really was a God, He had something to do with everything."

"Say, Dick, if God's eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, as we are definitely and solemnly told, then His heart is too pure to decree it, and say what you will, bondage of any kind is iniquitous."

Dick's eyes grew big, and he looked so dazed and so curious that his companion burst out laughing.

"You're a funny boy," she said, "and so transparent. You see I knew what you were driving at when you first opened your mouth. You have always tried to make me repent my engagement—I wonder why? Is it all selfishness, dear?"

"I dunno what 'tis," the young man replied desperately; "but, Lib, you have always had such a fine spirit, held your head so high, and now all I can think of is a whipped dog——"

"Dick Eastman," exclaimed Libra, "how dare you insult me by such words? I—a whipped cur?"

"Please don't get mad. I didn't mean to hurt you, but you must change your gait, sis. Everybody notices how slowly you are walking. I see them watch you and I hear them talk. Of course—" as Libra sat silent with averted head—"we all know that there isn't a better fellow than Horace Winterhead in the city. His word is as good as his bond, and he has a splendid reputation among business men. I like him first rate when he's not with you—then—I—I—well, I pretty nearly hate him. It is the unanimous opinion that you have made a great catch, landed a big fish. But there is one dissenter—I am that one—and sometimes I think there are two."

"Who is the second one?" Libra asked, without looking up.

"Yourself."

"Tell me one thing, Dick. Did you ever know me satisfied long at a time with anything?" the girl inquired, a little catch in her voice, which constrained her companion to draw nearer and place his hand affectionately upon hers.

"Don't you remember," she continued, "when I was a little tot how quickly I tired of my toys, never mind how much I had longed for them, or how beautiful and expensive? I never destroyed them like many other children. I always wanted to give them away, and, Dick, that is what I would sometimes like to do with Horace Winterhead."

Dick laughed and so did Libra, but they both felt that it was anything but a laughing matter.

"It will be a pretty bad give-away if you marry him with such feelings," the brother replied sadly.

"Yes, Dick, but I am going to get entirely over them. Now, Horace would be absolutely perfect if he were not so masterful—so——"

"Bossy," suggested Dick.

"Yes, bossy; I have commenced, Dickie, to take my young man down, and he has simply got to find out that I have opinions and convictions that are just as important and sacred to me as are his to him."

Dick looked incredulous, but very much interested.

"How does it work?" he asked.

"Well, I can tell better to-night how my last experiment turned out. It was awfully funny and I have laughed a hundred times about it; but whew! wasn't his lordship furious!"

"Tell a fellow what 'twas all about, won't you?"

"Well, yesterday we had been to see some pictures, and he was walking home with me, when we came upon our old organ-grinder. We bowed to each other smilingly as usual, and I was about to take some money from my purse, when Horace pulled my sleeve and said:

"'Don't do that, Elizabeth.'

"For the moment I took no notice, but dropped some change in the grinder's cap and walked on.

"'May I ask why you still persist in doing the things that you know I disapprove of?' he inquired, in a way that made me want to box his ears.

"Then I said, 'May I ask, Mr. Winterhead, why you so constantly interfere in my affairs?'

"'Our engagement gives me a right to tell you what I do and do not like, and also a right to expect that you will respect my opinions and wishes,' he answered.

"Oh, Dick, wasn't I wild!"

"Reflect, sis, that if that row had been kicked up after marriage, you couldn't have run home as you have now."

"I have thought that all out, Dickie, and I am determined that the man I marry shall not tuck me under the skin of his personality, and expect his heart to beat for me, his lungs to breathe for me, and his brain to think for me—not much."

"What happened after that?"

"Well then I said:

"'Mr. Winterhead, if that be the case, then our engagement gives me the right to expect that you will also respect my opinions and wishes. You'll find out before you get through that this is no one-sided, especially designed engagement for the man. It is an

equal-rights association, and if it isn't that it is nothing save a little experience that we have both been indulging in to sharpen our wits.'"

"Did you say that, Lib?" her companion asked, in admiration and keen approval.

"What did he say then?"

"That it was not according to the usages of good society for a young lady to display such an interest in a street tramp—and I replied that he was no street tramp, but a respectable Italian who earned his money honestly, and that I had known him ever since I was a little girl, and that I should speak to him and give him money whenever and wherever I saw him. Then he said:

"'Elizabeth, this is a very foolish thing to quarrel about, but as long as it involves a principle—it may as well be this as something else.'"

"'Principle?' said I, with a sniff. 'The real name for it is false pride,' and then we were at the steps, and I said good-evening, and he said good-evening, and that is all, so far."

"Suppose he makes an issue of this?"

"I hope he will."

"You won't give up first?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, sis, do you really think you can stick to it?"

"I think I can, but, Dick, there are some other things that are not so easy to manage—questions that have two big sides, and often I know that I am the one in fault. You see I don't want to give up anything—no, Dick," as her brother shook his head, "not a single thing. In my way I think I am just as arrogant and unyielding as he is. The only difference is that I usually give up at last—after a fight you know—and he never does."

"And that's just where the danger lies."

"Dickie, darling, I am fully aware of it, but don't preach. Oh, what would mamma say if she knew of these frequent discussions and divisions? Isn't it a blessed thing for me that she hasn't a single intuition? It wouldn't be that way if I were a mother?"

"Perhaps not," said Dick drily, "but you

would doubtless go just as far the other way, and imagine things that never existed."

"You never said a truer thing. The fact is, you are getting to be a regular philosopher. Sometimes, Dick, life seems to me like a great carpet, this figure and this color dashing into another figure and another shade; tiny dots here, and squares and triangles, but it all helps to make the carpet. There must be a Designer somewhere who is working in wisdom, and the natural inference is that we are all different for a purpose."

"That kind of reasoning would lead straight to the broad road of folly," her brother replied. "You had better not try to walk on that carpet; it is not for you."

That evening Capricorn did not call, nor was there a line from him. A few friends came who left early, and then Libra found that she was obliged to change her views in regard to her mother, as she was frequently compelled to change them about other things.

"Elizabeth, didn't you expect Mr. Win-

terhead this evening," the lady asked anxiously.

"Men are to be expected only when they arrive," Libra replied.

"But he certainly told me he should be here, and don't you remember he was going to bring me that work on feudal aristocracy?"

"Mr. Winterhead is a lawyer and it is my impression that he has a difficult case on his hands," said Libra, with laughing eyes. "He may not be here for a day or two."

She considered it advisable to quiet her companion's evident suspicion, and allow a little time for the development of this "important case." If worse came to worst, her mother would have been saved at least a little anxiety.

A half-hour later Mrs. Eastman appeared in her daughter's boudoir.

"Elizabeth," she said solemnly, "something tells me you have been quarrelling with Mr. Winterhead."

"Well, what next?" Libra exclaimed.

"After this the deluge, mamma. You impressed?" and now the girl broke into the merriest laughter.

"Who impressed you? Where is he? What did he say? Just mention his name, and I'll have it out with him."

"Well, I was worried," Mrs. Eastman remarked, and Libra was very glad to hear the little verb accentuated.

"It seemed to me that when he was here last, his manner was a trifle distrait——"

"That was the lunatic-asylum case," Libra told herself, with keen enjoyment of the situation.

"And of course," Mrs. Eastman continued, "one never knows what you will do next. If the time should arrive when you cease to be frivolous, and come to some sort of a realization of the honor which this splendid young man has done you by asking you to be his wife, I shall be thankful. I am really on pins and needles most of the time for fear of what may occur."

"You will not be pricked so much after I am married?" the girl inquired, with assumed

nonchalance. There was no farce now in the situation.

"No; and, Elizabeth, it doesn't seem possible that Heaven will at last be so good to me as to free me from this terrible responsibility. When you are married I shall feel safe."

"And what about me, mamma?"

Libra's voice was cool and steady, but her spirit was in the wildest revolt.

"You will be safe in the care of a correct and distinguished man."

"And that is all there is of it? Suppose we should not agree after marriage? To put it coarsely, suppose we should fight?"

"Many married people disagree, Elizabeth, but most of 'em make the best of the situation, and find after a while that it matters very little whether they think alike or not."

"It is a godly arrangement, isn't it?" said Libra, feeling like a fly that had been caught in the spider's inextricable meshes.

"Good-night, mamma. We shall see what we shall see."

"Widows in the Ganges, flesh and blood selling flesh and blood," she continued after her mother had left the room. "There is just as much ignorance and diabolism in the so-called civilized and cultured society of to-day."

And yet with all the evidence before her, the sacred protest of her own pure soul, our Libra, like most other Libras, did not have the glimmering of an idea that the issues of life were in her own hands, and that the God in herself must rule her destiny.

The next morning at breakfast there was a letter for Libra, which she leisurely opened, hastily scanned, and returned to the envelope?

"Mr. Winterhead?" queried Mrs. Eastman.

"Yes, mamma."

"What does he say?

"Drive at three o'clock—that's all!"

There was one radiant face in the group, and that was the mother's.

VIII.

If there was one thing that our Libra disliked more than another, it was driving in the city. To be compelled to pass through busy, occupied streets for two or three miles before reaching the park or less frequented roads, was trying in the extreme. To put it squarely, she was afraid; and no man, however deft in the management of horses, inspired her with the least confidence. Capricorn was a good whip and particularly cautious, but the pleasure of the open country when it was reached was always marred to Libra by the dread of the return trip.

To-day the girl's mind was burdened with various matters—very heavily burdened, it seemed to her, and the thought of the three or four hours' excursion to which she was doomed added seriously to her nervous discomfort.

"Which way this time?" her companion

smilingly inquired as she sprang to her seat.

"I don't know as it makes any especial difference," was the untactful response. "There are just so many drays and express wagons and electric cars to meet, and just so many miles of cobble-stones before one can get anywhere."

"Perhaps you would rather not drive this afternoon," the young man remarked, looking very handsome and noble, as he stood, reins in hand, by the side of the handsome turnout.

"We are not going to begin again this afternoon, are we?" Libra inquired, with narrowing eyes and flushing cheeks. She had not ventured so far as this before. In every respect since her engagement she had been the smiling, obedient woman, never until lately attempting to assert herself even under direct provocation.

"It occurs to me that your plural pronoun is unfairly chosen," the young man replied, still maintaining his position.

"You are right. So it was. Jump in and let's be off."

If Libra had finished the sentence as it formed itself in her mind, it would have been something like this—"or we shall never get back." To get home and put a week or two between herself and the prospect of another drive was the dearest wish of her heart just now.

"I'm afraid you do not like horses," the young man remarked after a while. "If you do not, it will be a tremendous disappointment to me."

"I do like them. Nobody on earth likes them better, but I enjoy them most in the country where there is room. As a child I was always timid in the city, and many's the time when papa was alive that I have been in the cars or stayed at home rather than go in the carriage."

It was out at last and Libra felt relieved. It seemed to her that this was an excellent opportunity to acquaint the man she was going to marry with this nervous peculiarity.

There was silence for a moment or two, and then Capricorn turned his handsome,

beaming face to his companion, and remarked very sweetly, but very firmly:

"This will have to be put an end to, Elizabeth. You know yourself it is simple cowardice. There isn't an atom of sense in it. A woman, no more than a man, can afford to be a coward. The best way to overcome fear is to familiarize yourself with the thing you fear. I think my best plan will be to take you out two or three times a week. After a while you will enjoy it as much as I do."

The audacity of this suggestion seemed without parallel, but, after all, was it not exactly like the rest of the training she had received from the first moment of meeting this fearless, superior, and well-poised creature? Libra asked herself.

There was no response, and evidently there was none expected. The skilful driver was now busy with his horses, and when he spoke again it was plain that the subject had passed entirely from his mind. He had said what was proper and would do what he said. His wife should not be afraid of horses. That was settled.

There were a thousand things that Libra longed to say, but the will of her companion was like a ton's weight upon her. She could neither evade it nor resist it. He was bringing her up over again and it was a tedious process; but this was the way of men, she supposed, and, being a woman, she must submit, as all womankind had done before her. And just here a strange thing happened. Denizens of the middle sign of the air triplicity are very apt to have singular experiences, but this one was unique. A burning, scorching pain seized her finger immediately under the engagement ring. The area covered by the pain seemed no wider than the ring, but beneath the diamond the torture was almost unendurable. She did not once think of speaking about it, although she had no idea of anything occult or uncanny. After bearing the discomfort as long as she could, she very quietly removed her glove, drew off the ring, and put it in her pocket. To her utter surprise the pain immediately ceased. Then she recalled the fact that the ring was quite loose, and that

her glove had made no pressure upon it. What could it mean? and now the active mind was full of speculation. Would she ever get back to her own room, where she could think these things over?

Would Mr. Winterhead expect to return in the evening? What could she say to hinder him? "I never have told him a falsehood," she thought, "but if I marry this man I shall be the biggest liar on earth. I'm sure of it. There will be no other way to get along with him."

All through the long drive a pleasant conversation was kept up, notwithstanding the tumult that was raging in the spirit of this sensitive girl. Capricorn knew everybody and was particularly fond of fine old places, and these were eloquently described. There never was a genuine Libra native who cared a straw for family histories or family relics, though they occasionally try to simulate an interest in antiquity and antiquated bookcases, stands, tongs, china, etc. This is simply the endeavor to be fashionable; to do and to have what other people of supposed good

taste do and have. But Libra behaved very well, replying in good form, and asking the questions that she knew her companion was delighted to answer. As long as he did not expect her to remember about these people, she felt that she could bear it. But if he ever should ask her to repeat the lesson, the end of all things would be nigh. On the way back Capricorn pointed with his whip to one of these beautiful mansions, and remarked:

"You remember, Elizabeth, what I told you about that family?"

"Oh, yes," promptly responded Elizabeth.

"Well, then, tell your mother about them, please. She mentioned them the other evening and I know she will be pleased to hear the story."

"I'll leave the pleasure to you," said the tactful girl. "When mamma gets started on houses and lands and pedigrees she bores me almost to death."

"You are not one bit like your mother, dear."

"I hope not," said Libra, and as the words left her lips she realized that this was the

first critical remark upon this subject that she had ever made. She would have given anything to be able to recall it, and especially when Mr. Winterhead turned a remonstrant face to hers.

"Why, Elizabeth!" he said.

"You needn't 'why, Elizabeth' me!" she protested, goaded now to the point of speaking her mind.

"Mamma," she continued, "cares everything for family, and wealth, and outside interests. If ever a woman lived entirely in the external that woman is my mother."

"Where under the sun would you have her live?" Capricorn interrupted, a half-amused and a half-amazed expression upon his face. "Where else is there to live?"

"There is another place, Horace, but I cannot describe it, because I have had glimpses of it only. It is a sweet and simple and holy spot, and those fortunate enough to find it care very little for pomp and show and distinguished ancestors. I long for it more than for anything else in life, but I don't seem to make much headway."

"You are a very dear girl, Elizabeth, but you are getting morbid and it must be stopped. Can you not see how illogical you are, with your talk about the external and the inner? What would you think of the person who thought it best not to live on the outside of the planet, but to dig a hole and crawl as far as possible toward the centre. There is just as much sense in your talk about the outside and the inside. Your mother accepts life as she finds it, and she does not disdain the things that make for happiness. There are cranks and cranks, Elizabeth, and my opinion is that they all need good strong medical treatment."

Libra realized that there was no use in attempting a reply. She was overruled, as usual. The process wasn't pleasant, but perhaps she ought to be extinguished, she reasoned. Compared with this splendid specimen of a man, what was she? What did she know? He was not vain of his knowledge, but there seemed to be no subject political, social, or literary that he did not understand. Of course she should look up to him. Her

mother was right when she said that any sensible girl would adore him. Libra guessed she did adore him. She had contracted a habit of being indifferent, and now thought it was smart. In other words, she had created and consecrated her own limitations; she had had a bad bringing-up. No wonder the man wanted to raise her over again. Of course she loved him. There was every reason why she should, and not one single reason why she should not. She loved him to distraction. She would adore him to the end of her days.

Failing to do this, she would be the most ungrateful girl in the world. Just think what unwearied pains he took to make her happy! He did make her happy. How handsome he was, and how noble and fascinating in every respect! He was the soul of honor—everybody said that, and he should find her true and patient and amiable. It wasn't every girl that had such a lover as this.

And so resolve after resolve passed through the girl's mind, even as she talked

and laughed with her companion. When they reached home Capricorn said:

"I have a business engagement at the club this evening, Elizabeth, but I see no reason why we may not take another drive to-morrow afternoon."

This suggestion was made with a rare smile, but it acted like a cold-water douche upon his companion. In an instant she had forgotten all the things she had been telling herself. The tremendous will-power of the man was again apparent and again unendurable.

"Not to-morrow, thank you," she replied.

"Well, how about next day?"

"We will talk about that to-morrow evening," she responded. "I suppose you will be here."

"Undoubtedly," was the smiling answer. "I am very sorry that I cannot be with you to-night."

"Oh, blessed reprieve!" said the girl to herself as she entered the house. "How can I be thankful enough that some things have an end?"

"Nice drive?" said Dick at the dinner-table.

"Very."

"I suppose those horses are Mr. Winterhead's?" said Mrs. Eastman.

"Maybe," replied Libra. "I never asked him. But I can't see what he wants of two."

"What he wants of two! If he had but one you might ask what he wanted of that. If there is anything that looks poverty-stricken it is to see a man drive one horse."

"Horse-cars are good enough for me," muttered Libra.

"Why, Elizabeth, there *are* no horse-cars" —Mrs. Eastman was always literal—"and why you should prefer any kind of cars to a carriage and horses is more than I can imagine."

"Another row?" Dick inquired, as brother and sister met a moment in the drawing-room.

"No, Dickie, but this kind of a life is wearisome. I'm an awful coward and shouldn't like to get out of it alone, but if we could all go together in one grand smash, it would be blissful."

IX.

Once more alone in her room, the only place where she seemed to rest and gather strength, Libra took her engagement ring from its hiding-place and carefully examined it. She had almost expected that it would speak to her, so wrought up had she become in her speculations concerning the strange incident. But it looked very innocent and pretty, and as she held it to the light and beheld the cheerful and beautiful play of color, she wondered how she could have been so silly as to attribute to it any power to give her pain.

"It must have been the pressure of my glove," she thought. "I will slip it on again and see if there is any repetition of the experience."

But there was none, and then Libra began to wonder if she had not imagined the scorching pain. As she sat waiting and thinking,

she noticed that there were some letters on the table, and she picked up one and read as follows:

"My Dear Elizabeth:

"We haven't had many larks since your engagement—worse luck—but now I have a beautiful one to propose. But it must be an absolutely secret expedition; so if you feel obliged to tell the Grand Master of your destiny every thing you do or think, you are not the girl for this little spree. Read and reflect. If you have reserved a little freedom for yourself, come on. If not, I know you will burn this letter and keep my secret, at least. This is it. There is a strange old man, whom one of my friends knows very well, who for some purpose has left his foreign retreat for just a brief period. He seems to possess a wonderful power. I have arranged to call upon him next Tuesday afternoon. Will you go with me? I am perfectly ignorant of occult matters, but there are a lot of things that I would like to know. For instance, I am bothered half to death by three real good fellows. It seems to me that I like them all equally, but there is a law against my marrying them all, and I do hate to hurt the feelings of either one. The more

I think about marriage, Elizabeth, the more convinced I am that a girl should be very careful. Now let me tell you something. I have been observing lately, and I find that there is but just one young man that I really like to have touch my hand, or be near me, and he, dear Elizabeth, is apparently as indifferent to me as the wind that blows. The three above mentioned I am quite enamored of when they keep at a distance. I guess I could live with either of 'em to all eternity if this blessed distance would always obtain, but I know it will not, and so I am thinking, thinking, thinking. I wonder why some mothers are in such a hurry to settle their daughters. We are rich enough to support one old maid, but these words strike horror to my mother's soul. I believe she would rather have me marry an old-clothes man than not to marry at all. Oh, Elizabeth, I hope you are truly in love, and that the sound of his voice is music to your ears, and the slightest touch of his hand an ecstasy. I suppose you will shrug your shoulders, and call me a rattle-brained enthusiast, but I have seen scores of married women shrug their shoulders when their lords and masters were near, and the movement was neither pretty nor faith-inspiring. Their noses were

generally tilted, too. It is better, seems to me, to shrug and snub before marriage than afterward. But forgive me, dear, I didn't mean to preach. I was simply talking to myself.

"Will you go? "HELEN."

"The sound of his voice, music to my ear, and the touch of his hand an ecstasy," repeated Libra, after reading the letter over a second time. "Horace has a lovely voice and the handsomest hand I ever saw. It is so shapely and so strong that I like to look at it as one likes to look at a fine picture, but Helen and I must be very much alike, for I also crave the blessed distance that she speaks of. I wonder if she really cares very much for the man who doesn't care for her. That would be a worse predicament than mine—but oh! what am I saying—I, who have every good gift showered upon me, and the best fellow in the world for my lover? Of course I will go to see this queer old gentleman. Perhaps it is the same one that the Winterheads were talking about."

The next day Libra visited the insane asy-

lum, and played for those of the inmates who were allowed to come into the music hall. Mrs. Winterhead came in after she had been playing a while, and waited until the somewhat strange, but certainly inspirational, concert was over. The engagement ring figured conspicuously again on this occasion. One of the least excitable of the patients, a very sweet and spiritual-looking woman about thirty years old, was allowed to sit close to the musician. She was not in the least troublesome, and rarely ever said anything, but listened as decorously and with apparently as keen an enjoyment as any philharmonic or symphony concert *habitué*. Once in a while she leaned over and searchingly scrutinized the performer's left hand. When the pleasant hour was over, the woman touched the ring lightly and said with a smile—"That ring seems like a crystal that I once looked into. Will you let me take your hand?"

"Certainly," said Libra; "come to the window."

"No, let us take a dark corner instead,"

her companion replied, and the two walked together to a remote part of the room.

"I see a handsome, dark face," she went on after a moment's intent examination of the stone—"a man's face full of power. He is a grand character and he loves you. But you are not for any man that you have ever seen. You will know when your mate comes. I also am waiting for mine in this institution for lunatics, and, dear Miss Eastman, I am not one bit in the world crazy."

With these strange words she turned and walked slowly from the room. Libra did not follow her for fear of exciting the suspicions of the nurses, but she took occasion to ask one of the officials what was the nature of the mania of this most interesting character.

"She is a puzzle to us all," the gentleman answered. "She is a perfect lady from the top of her head to the soles of her feet. She was never known to offend good taste, and the only thing that proves her to be a little off is that she has strange visions. She had one for me not long ago, and, by George!

talk about your mediums and fortune-tellers —why, they are nowhere."

"You mean that she told you correctly something that you did not know yourself."

"Just that."

"Who placed her here?"

"That I am not at liberty to tell."

"But do you not consider her sane?"

"She was not considered sane by experts."

Libra turned away sick at heart. She had been greatly attracted to this beautiful woman, and felt sure that she was the victim of some terrible plot. But what could she do? This case was simply a drop in the ocean of woe. What good to relieve any if one could not lift them all?

After some thought, Libra decided to tell Mrs. Winterhead of the singular interview. She knew she could safely do so, although latterly this lady had seemed to enter into the plans for the approaching marriage with as much enthusiasm as her own mother. This was a little strange to Libra, who did not know that Sagittarius, after having done all to prevent or bring about whatever

it seemed a duty to hinder or help, when forced by the inevitable, always accepts it with a good grace.

The thoughtful woman listened very gravely to the remarkable narrative. When it was finished, Libra said pleadingly:

"Please, dear friend, tell me what you think of it."

"I believe, Elizabeth, that there are more things in heaven and earth than were ever dreamt of in our philosophy. This woman is doubtless a fine clairvoyant, getting at the things she saw in her own peculiar way. She might have seen this same picture in your eyes, had she concentrated her attention upon them."

Libra recalled the experience with the diamond the day before, and silently demurred. She could not bring herself to speak of this episode, at least not yet.

"How do you regard the words of this woman?" Mrs. Winterhead inquired.

"I do not know. I feel like one entirely at the mercy of the winds and the waves. I seem to have no mind of my own. I am

simply a human puppet. Somebody pulls the string and I dance or do not dance, as the case may be. Mrs. Winterhead, it seems to me about time for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The world is in an awful state. Think of that beautiful, heavenly woman condemned to live among lunatics, and she as sane as—as you are. I was going to say as I am, but I'm as mad as a March hare."

"What good do you think the personal presence of Jesus Christ would do in this period of the world's history?" Mrs. Winterhead asked.

"Why, it would bring order out of chaos, light out of darkness, just as it did once before. It would settle things."

"Did His personal presence settle things all those years ago? Was there any less sickness, any less death, or terrible sin, after His life and teaching than before?"

"Please don't take Jesus Christ away from me," Libra pleaded. "I never could understand God, and He is all I have had to cling to and really love."

"I have no wish to take Him away from

you," was the earnest reply. "What I would like to do is to show Him to you as I think He really is. But first answer me. Did Jesus Christ take away the sins of the world?"

"No," Libra responded sadly, "but I never thought of it before."

"What then did He do?"

"I don't know as anything," said Libra perplexed and sorrowful.

"Oh, my dear, you are mistaken again. He did everything. He showed us how to live and how to overcome everything, even to the last enemy, death. His example is for all time. 'Behold, I am with you even unto the end of the world,' He said—the end of carnality, weakness, and sorrow. Don't you see He could not have meant His physical or personal presence would be with us. What He wanted us to understand was that the Christ spirit, the Christ principle was in every person born into the world, and that by a realization of our oneness with the divine we could do the same great deeds that He did."

"Oh! Mrs. Winterhead!" Libra exclaimed with shining eyes.

"Yes, child, do you not remember that He said to His disciples, 'Even greater things than these can ye do'?"

Air people are sometimes very direct, notwithstanding their scattering characteristics; so it was not strange that Libra should ask a few pointed questions.

"Do you really believe these things you have been telling me?" was the first one.

"With all my heart and soul."

"Then what is to hinder you from doing the things that Jesus Christ did? Why can you not heal the sick and raise the dead?"

"My belief is of comparatively recent date, Elizabeth, and the habits and misconceptions of years are not easily overcome. I am working as bravely and steadfastly as I know how, and can show some splendid evidences of growth. I have done some very creditable healing, dear, and every day I realize more of the Christ in myself. You will understand, of course, that I do not say this boastingly."

"Indeed I do, my dear friend, but oh! how much you have given me to think of! You will tell me more of these wonderful things, will you not, and show me how to do something worth while for the world?"

"It is an old and a very wise saying, Elizabeth, that 'charity begins at home,'" was the frank response. "'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me,' said Jesus Christ. This saying is just as true of us. Get your own poise, dear; come into at-one-ment with truth; in other words, 'seek first the kingdom of heaven, and everything else shall be added'—every single thing."

"I am sure, now, that it is well I am going to marry Horace," Libra remarked after a thoughtful pause, "for you can teach me everything."

A pained look overspread Mrs. Winterhead's bright face.

"It will be very sweet to call you mother," Libra added.

"I will be that in any event," her companion answered, "but remember, my child, that we must all work out our own salvation.

Our friends can occasionally give us little helps, but the bulk of the work must be done by the Christ spirit which is right in here," and the speaker placed her hand reverently upon her bosom and then added pointedly: "It is for you, Elizabeth, to decide what is best for yourself in all matters. You should not allow any one else to think for you."

"But how can I tell what is right?"

There was a sob in her voice as Libra asked this question.

"The divine spirit in you will speak the word if you will only give it a chance."

Just here the carriage stopped at the Eastmans' door, and with a kiss the friends parted.

X.

"You don't want to be too intimate with your husband's people, Elizabeth," said Mrs. Eastman one morning, after hearing her daughter's expression of admiration for Mrs. Winterhead.

"It seems to me it would be the part of wisdom to wait till I have a husband," Libra replied.

"Oh, it amounts to the same thing. For my part I dislike very much to see girls visiting the families they expect to marry into. Such familiarity is very apt to breed contempt. Now your father's people called upon me and I returned the call, and I never shall forget how strange I felt when I rang that door-bell."

"Bashful?"

"No, but you see I knew I was going to be picked to pieces, criticised, dissected, and it was a terrible ordeal for a young girl.

They were the strangest people, not at all agreeable, although they entertained a great deal. When I spoke to you about the danger of being too thick with your husband's relations I knew from a bitter experience what I was talking about. Notwithstanding their peculiarities, there was a singular fascination about them, and I became sort of magnetized, as it were. Well, one day they stirred up the greatest rumpus about something they declared I had said, and your father was dragged into it, and it was just awful."

"Poor papa," thought Libra, but she did not say anything. She was trying now most faithfully to cultivate the meek and quiet spirit which she felt must be hers before she could make any headway in self-government. She was beginning to see her own great need, and the inspiring talks with Mrs. Winterhead had helped to clear up a great many hitherto obscure subjects. "Charity begins at home," that lady had quoted, and so Libra commenced her work of regeneration with her mother as the objective point. It was exceedingly difficult, for it is doubtful if

there was ever a more trying woman than Mrs. Eastman. She had nagged her husband out of his body, and would have still pursued him had she been informed as to his location.

Intuition and suspicion cannot be said to be even distant relatives, but it is true that Mrs. Eastman's suspicion sometimes gave her as deep an insight into existing affairs as the other quality would have done. She was very quick to seize upon a chance word and turn it to advantage. Then, there were certain self-evident propositions in her daughter's so-called love affairs, which he who ran might read. In this lady's opinion there was but one wise thing to do, and that was have the marriage take place at as early a date as possible. Whether the lover was possessed of the same feeling as Mrs. Eastman it would be hard to tell, for Capricorn knew enough to keep his own counsel and conceal his own opinions. There was no "heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at," no emotion visible in his face, no nervousness, no restlessness in his manner. He attended strictly

to his own business and expected every one else to do the same. But with all this he was also anxious to induce Libra to name the time of the wedding. He had also talked with Mrs. Eastman on the subject, and the unanimity of opinion which obtained was especially grateful to the anxious mother. Day after day and week after week Libra had been tormented about cards and invitations, reception and wedding garments, but she knew that another trial awaited her on this occasion, and she braced herself to bear it. Her mother had led up very carefully, as she thought, to the necessary point, and now delivered herself as follows:

"I'm very glad that Horace does not approve of long engagements."

No answer.

"He is so practical. He told me the other afternoon when you were out that he considered six months quite long enough for lovers to become acquainted with each other."

"Did he use the word lovers, mamma?" Libra asked, hoping to be able to turn the conversation into another channel.

"I don't know as he did. He might have said people or persons, but what he did say was what I told you. And I quite agree with him."

"Mamma, I would like to ask you one question, and I should be so glad of an honest, unreserved answer."

It did seem to this sorely tried, irresolute yet thoroughly conscientious girl that perhaps she had been unjust to her mother, and that because of the latter's wider experience there might be a really unselfish reason for the anxiety exhibited in the matter of a speedy disposition of herself.

"Well, ask the question," said Mrs. Eastman, blandly. "I hope I shall be equal to it."

"I want you to tell me why you are so desirous of hurrying up this marriage. Please tell me the exact truth. I shall value it."

Mrs. Eastman was engaged upon a pretty bit of embroidery, which had seemed to claim all her attention. There was a new note in her daughter's voice, which she did not in the least comprehend, but which ap-

pealed to the best part of her nature. She threw aside her work and met her companion's steady gaze unflinchingly.

"I will tell you exactly," she replied. "It is because you have such a vacillating nature that I do not feel that I can trust you."

"Thank you," said Libra sadly.

"This has naturally been a great trial to me," the lady resumed, evidently touched by her daughter's manner, "but you came honestly by it. Your poor papa was exactly the same, and——"

"Never mind about papa," Libra interrupted.

"It is no harm, I hope, to say that you two were as much alike as two peas in a pod. If it is, I have said it, that is all."

"My father was the best man that ever lived on this earth, and I am glad to be like him. I mean I wish I were really like him," said Libra proudly. "If he were here to-day he would begrudge every minute that was taking me away from him. He wouldn't be"—she was going to say "in such a hurry

to get rid of me," but because of the new light that was beginning to shine in her soul, she substituted—"anxious to have me marry."

"Sentiment, my dear, sentiment, all sentiment. What this world would come to if there were not a few practical people in it I am sure I don't know. Now just look at the matter from a common-sense view. Richard will doubtless fall in love and marry before long, and I—well, I am getting along in years, and may be taken away at any time. You are in no respect capable of taking care of yourself. As a good and a wise mother, I want to know that your future is provided for."

"But how can you know that?" Libra asked. "It does not seem to me that you are any more likely to die than others. You certainly will not stop breathing very soon on account of old age. Mr. Winterhead has no more security of his life than you or I have. It doesn't seem possible to appoint a perpetual guardian for anybody. There are difficulties on both sides. The ward is as

likely to get out as the guardian, and the guardian as the ward."

"Oh well, that is your helter-skelter way of looking at it. It seems to me that mothers should be sometimes considered, but they rarely are in this selfish world."

Libra took no notice of the appeal. Its weakness disgusted her, and made her more than ever aware of how little in the matter of true motherly love there was for her to rely upon.

"Here is another question I wish to ask, and I would like as frank an answer as you gave before. We have never discussed the financial situation—I hate to talk about money, you know—but there is no pressing need why I should marry at once, is there?"

"Elizabeth, you are the most trying creature that lives upon this earth. Of course there isn't."

"In the event of my not marrying at all—how would it be then?"

"You would be a fool," and now Mrs. Eastman commenced to gather up her work preparatory to leaving the room. She was

not accustomed to such cool and dignified persistence, and her first thought was to get away and think it over.

"You must not go, mamma, till you have told me all I ought to know," the girl resumed.

"Your father's affairs are not yet settled," Mrs. Eastman replied, "and if you wish an accounting you will have to apply to somebody else. I am your natural guardian, at all events."

"For how long?"

"Until you are twenty."

"Then a third of what property there is will be mine?"

"That was the craziest will that ever was made, and I told your father so lots and lots of times. The money should have been mine during my lifetime, and at my death should have reverted to you," Mrs. Eastman replied, a bright red spot on both cheeks. "When the property is finally settled and Richard gets his share, he'll make ducks and drakes of it in no time, and as for you, I never could trust you with five dollars even. If you

couldn't spend it quickly enough, you'd give it to the first beggar you met."

"Do you think, mamma, that there will be enough money to supply all your wants for the next twenty years, and enable you to live in good style and all that sort of thing?"

Libra was still perfectly cool, and, strangely enough, did not feel the least temptation to talk back. She also wondered at this unusual calmness.

"I suppose there will be. The lawyer tells me that some investments are coming out better than he expected, but it will not take very much for my simple wants, Elizabeth."

Libra smiled at this point, and her mother, noticing it, petulantly added:

"You needn't laugh, I know how to take care of money, and that is more than your—"

"I think this is all, mamma," Libra interrupted.

"It may be all for you, but it isn't for me, by any means. You have put me through my catechism, and now you can take your turn.

"I demand to know, Elizabeth—yes, de-

mand"—as the girl unconsciously threw back her shoulders and took a deep breath—"what month and what day of the month, and what hour of the day you intend to be married?"

"I have no intentions at this time, mamma. The only thing that I do know is that, whenever I am married, there will be no public wedding ceremony, no invitations, and consequently no bids for presents. There will also be no wedding reception. Horace spoke of going to Europe. It will be time enough to send cards when we return."

Mrs. Eastman was in a white heat of passion.

"Do you suppose I am going to submit to this tyranny?" she inquired, her voice pitched to a high key. "You will be married in church, and have a reception and presents like other people. Mr. Winterhead and I have arranged all these details. I simply will not put up with any such nonsense, and I want you perfectly to understand it."

"Mamma, this isn't your wedding, it is mine," was the calm answer.

"But there is another party to that wedding, and I know him well enough to be sure that he will not allow you to sneak into a corner as if the occasion was one to be ashamed of——"

"You have said quite enough," replied Libra, "and when you speak of what any man will allow me to do you have gone entirely too far. If Horace doesn't like my arrangements he is not obliged to accept them. I have seen too many wedding circus performances, and I solemnly declare that I will not submit to such publicity."

Mrs. Eastman sank into a chair and burst out crying. This was a terrible blow to her pride and her love of display. It seemed almost as tragic as not marrying at all.

For a moment Libra stood and looked sadly at the weeping woman, and the realization that she could do nothing to comfort her, except to yield to her wishes, brought the tears to her own eyes, but she was not tempted to make the slightest concession.

"I am sorry, mamma," she began.

"You sorry?" exclaimed the excited wo-

man. "You sorry? Yes, just about as sorry as your father used to be when he had destroyed all my plans and broken my heart. I know all about the Eastman sympathy. I have——"

And here Libra turned and quietly left the room.

XI.

It was some time later when Libra realized what had been accomplished by this painful interview. From her earliest remembrance she had had a contempt for show weddings, and had always declared that when she was married it would be in a simple white gown and as privately as possible. She was well aware that her mother and her intended husband had canvassed this matter pretty thoroughly, but with more wisdom than was usually hers she had determined to wait till the right moment before positively declaring herself. This had seemed the acceptable time, and the final words had been spoken. It was the first time in her life that Libra had ever taken a stand in any important matter with the full assurance in her own mind that she would be able to maintain it. So sensitive had she been to criticism, so susceptible to influence,

so unwilling to wound the feelings of others or to interfere with their plans, and so distrustful of her own judgment, that she had always permitted herself to be overruled. What could it mean, she wondered, that in a crisis of this kind, with two such strong wills against her, she should feel so perfectly sure of her ability to carry the matter to a successful issue? It was incomprehensible, and then it suddenly dawned upon her that she did not feel nearly so helpless as heretofore. She recalled the inspirational conversations she had enjoyed with Mrs. Winterhead, and her own great desire to put the principles that had been placed before her into immediate practice. Could the seed sown have blossomed already?

"Would it not be a marvel if either in this world or the next I should become what Mrs. Winterhead calls an individual?" the girl reflected. "It must be the most delightful thing in life to be sure that one is in the right and then be able to stick to it."

It is doubtful if Libra would ever have spoken to her mother in regard to the amount

and the disposition of her father's property had it not been for a suggestion of Richard's.

"Of course we shall both get our share all right," he had said; "but mother has never recovered from the shock of finding out that father did not place her in absolute control as long as she lived, and it is my opinion that she'll take it out on us as far as she is able. I've spoken to the lawyer two or three times, and the only answer he ever makes me is, 'Why don't you ask your mother?' and, 'You know, my dear young man, that we haven't yet found out where we are. It will take a little time yet to know exactly.' You should give mother to understand, Elizabeth, that you are not quite a fool. Then again, it will be rather awkward to have your husband ask you some day how much money your father left."

"Well, Horace Winterhead would never do such an unmanly thing as that," Libra had replied. "I beg to assure you that he is a gentleman."

"Just so, sis; but when you are that gentleman's wife he will have a right to know

all about your affairs, and, moreover, it will be his duty to protect your interests. Look here, Lib," as his companion seemed ready with another protest, "I wish you'd come off of some of your high fences. Can't you understand that it is absolutely necessary to talk about money and take care of money, and that to get any comfort out of life we must keep hold of money? Winterhead nor any other good business man could not have the slightest respect for your squeamishness in such matters, and the time may come, sis, when you'll be mighty glad to have somebody who knows something to invest your money for you. Why, you wouldn't know what to do with even so small a sum as five thousand dollars."

"Oh, yes, I would," was the laughing response. "I could dispose of every penny of it before sunset."

"And another thing," Dick went on, saving his heaviest ammunition for the last charge, "in case anything should happen to call off this engagement—which, of course, is not probable—you don't want it sprung

upon you as it might be—mother has done some curious things—that you are taking the bread out of her mouth by your obstinacy."

"But, Richard, that could never be, because we all have our equal share."

"Yes, but if there wasn't very much property, good children would be expected to marry for support, or to deny themselves in any way, that the mother need not suffer. Elizabeth, I am firmly convinced that we shall be kept pretty well in the dark until we are disposed of. Do you know that I have just discovered that mother has a pet plan of marrying me to Helen Lester?"

"She might have chosen worse. Helen is a lovely girl," said Libra.

"I can't bear her," was the irritable response.

"Don't you know the reason, Dickie? It is just because mamma did the picking out. If you had made the selection yourself, I'll wager my new bonnet that you would like her very much."

"Well, I detest her as it is, whatever the reason, and it is the truth—you know, sis,

I'm not a conceited fellow—that Helen is fond of me. I'm sure she doesn't mean to show it, but she makes me blooming sick. Sometimes I think that mother has thrown a spell over her."

"One that reacts upon you. Oh, Dickie, what a kettle of fish! Did you ever wish you had never been born?"

"Yes, a million billion times. If mother would only keep her fingers out of my pie I should be obliged to her."

"Why don't you make her?"

"Make her? You ask that question, after all her meddling with you?" and Dick's laugh was full of derision.

"Did you ever think, dear," Libra asked, her face aglow with the new light that had lately dawned upon her, "that in order to be of any use we must individualize ourselves?"

"I don't know what you mean," Dick answered, looking rather perplexed.

"Well, that we must recognize the fact that we were created with minds which we were expected to use—each his own mind,

Dickie, not another's—and that while we should be kind and sympathetic and unselfish, we should never allow any one to trespass upon the sacred precincts of our conscience or on our own well-founded desires and inclinations. If we can once assimilate this truth the worst is over. For mercy's sake, Dick, do let's try and reach that glorious place. Tell me, please, why we should be slaves to anybody or anything."

"Well, I'll be hanged," Dick exclaimed, "if I don't believe you'll be somebody yet, and if you are, folks will have to stand round. Joan of Arc will shrink into insignificance. You always were the sweetest and jolliest sister a fellow ever had, but you did lack backbone most awfully. But, Lib, I hope this isn't all preach and no practice."

"Amen," replied his companion fervently. "And think over what I have said, will you not?"

"I shan't be likely to think of much else for the next few hours, at any rate," was the earnest response. "I tell you, sis, there is lots in that word individuality. If it's what

I think it is, it is the very opposite of personality."

"Good boy," his sister answered merrily. "It is wonderful how quickly you got at that. It took me weeks to dig it out."

It was a day or two after the interview between Libra and her mother before the former could find an opportunity for a private talk with Richard. Mrs. Eastman had scarcely spoken to either of her children since this memorable occasion, her habit being when angry with one person to be equally incensed with the world in general.

"I asked mamma," Libra told her brother when at last they were safely alone together, "if she thought there would be money enough to support her for twenty years, and she admitted that there would be; that she had no doubt of it. You see I put the question that way because I knew that if she looked forward to twenty years of luxury—you know, Dick, life without luxury would be a dead letter to her—there were likely to be generous slices for us."

"That was a regular *coup d'état*," Richard

replied. "I'll bet a hundred dollars she has gone to the lawyers now. Anyhow, you have discovered that you needn't get married to be supported."

"I didn't need that horrid hour with mamma to teach me that. Why, Dickie, there are a great many things I could do. I could teach music, and, perhaps you don't know it, but I could get all the engagements I want as a concert player."

"You a public performer? You slaving your life out as a music teacher!" and Richard's voice now was full of scorn.

"But would not one or both of those things be preferable to marrying a man I did not love?"

There was no answer, and Libra after a moment's pause resumed:

"I am caring more for Horace every day. I've always respected him and been fond of him, but it was hard work to reconcile myself to his dominant will. I think, Dickie, he has found out that I have a will also, and he does not antagonize me as formerly."

"Mother has probably told him to go a

little slow," said Dick, "but she will not care how hard his thumb comes down after marriage. Her thumb did the work in this establishment, for you know that father would do anything for peace. Poor father! 'Pon my word, I'd drown myself before night if I thought such a life as his was in store for me."

"I suppose our lives are about as we make them," was the somewhat sad reply. It does not take much to dampen the enthusiasm of Libra people, on account of their great impatience with obstacles. Richard's words had brought to view the old picture, which she had been steadfastly trying to dismiss from her mind. She had, as she thought, firmly decided to find no more fault with her lover and to have the utmost patience with her mother—but if—and her face grew hot as she mentally framed the words—there had been any such conspiring as Dick had just suggested, she wouldn't be responsible for the consequences.

Then she said aloud:

"I don't believe one word that you say

about mamma's hints to Mr. Winterhead, but if——"

"Well?" said her brother.

"But if I ever find out that there has been such a conspiracy against me——"

"You never will find it out," was the aggravating answer, and the speaker then added after a pause: "still, you may when it is too late to do you any good."

"You're a regular thorn in the flesh, Dick," said his companion, doing her best to rally, "but I'm going to pick you out and not allow you to sting me again."

"It says somewhere in the Bible, Elizabeth, that we should be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. That passage has always attracted me. It's mighty good advice for you, and for me also. One thing is sure, I'm not going to have any jobs put up on me, and don't you; and for mercy's sake, in your endeavor to be good don't slide into silliness. I've known people to do that before now."

"I'll try not, dear," and with these words Libra seated herself at the piano and commenced to play softly. At this point Mrs.

Eastman entered the room. Her manner was constrained, and it would have been plain to the most superficial observer that she had something on her mind which she intended to get off as soon as possible. She sat down with a sigh and began to remove her gloves.

"Had a nice outing, mamma?" Libra asked brightly, anxious to break the oppressive silence. Richard could have boxed her ears.

"Why didn't she let her flounder?" he mentally inquired. "The idea of helping her out. Elizabeth's a fool."

"Because you have pleasant outings is no reason for supposing that other people have," the lady replied.

"Let me take the pin out of your hat," said Libra, as her mother made ineffectual attempts to rescue it from the sombre folds of the widow's veil.

"I don't need any of your help, thank you. I put it in myself, as I do everything else for myself, and I can take it out myself. What are you doing home, Richard, at this time of day?"

"I seem to be quite innocently engaged at the present time doing nothing," was the calm response.

"You are certainly an hour earlier than usual."

"Two hours, mother."

"How did that happen?"

Richard glanced down at his trousers.

"Your manner suggests short pants, mother," said he.

Mrs. Eastman arose, gathered up her belongings, and walked toward the door.

"It may interest you," she remarked, upon the threshold, "to know that I have been to see the lawyer in obedience to a request from him received last evening. Some stocks in which your father invested, as usual in an utter disregard of my wishes and advice, have gone wrong, and what the end will be nobody knows. I used to tell him that he would beggar us all."

"It's all rot!" said Dick, striding across the floor and facing his angry parent. "In settling up an estate like my father's there are always snags to be encountered. They

are inevitable, but father knew what he was about every time. Washburne told me not more than a week ago that he had the most sagacious business brain he ever knew."

"Then you have been to see Mr. Washburne?"

"I see him quite often."

"What business have you meddling in my affairs?"

"They are no more your affairs than ours, mother."

Richard's tone was respectful, and this fact only made the situation more unendurable; "and I am not in the least afraid but what there will be enough and to spare for us all."

At this juncture Mrs. Eastman left the room.

Libra shook her head sadly, and Dick whistled a few bars of Annie Rooney.

XII.

It was with some misgivings and not a little trepidation that Libra saw the day approach that had been named for her interview with the strange old man of whom she had heard so much. The Winterheads, father and mother, had frequently spoken of him, and though they had not advised her to hear him lecture or seek him more privately, Libra felt very sure that they would be pleased to have her do so.

"But was it right?" the girl asked herself. Since her attention had been called to these scientific and occult subjects, it seemed that almost every book and paper she took up was impregnated with the singular ideas. She hungered and thirsted for knowledge. Her constant prayer was for understanding. Would she gain in wisdom by listening to the communications of this man who for long years had remained in seclusion for the sake

of what he might ultimately give to his fellow creatures? Might not her imagination become so fired that her last state would be infinitely worse than all the states that had preceded it? Surely there was no one who extracted more apparent comfort from life than the man to whom she was betrothed, and he did not seek for any of these weird and uncommon things. Nature and art and the good cheer of life satisfied him entirely, or at least this is what he said of himself. A few, a very few times Libra had noticed that he appeared sad and discontented, was not up to his usual smooth and perfect standard. Once in reply to an affectionate question of hers, he had said:

"I think, Elizabeth, that I suffer as little from depression as any man that I know, and when I do have the blues it is because some physical organ is out of order."

"But don't you think it is about time that people should begin to know something about their bodies—how to govern them, how to keep them in a condition where the blues would be impossible?"

Libra spoke more wisely than she realized. The thought uppermost in her mind was that this man, who seemed so perfectly poised most of the time, should be able to hold himself at this point without deviation.

"That sounds like mother," her companion had replied. "Elizabeth, that woman does not even believe in microbes. I can prove scientifically that they exist, and she declares that they do not. She is the dearest woman in the world, and can teach you perfectly about housekeeping; but I should be very sorry to find you imbued with any of her transcendental notions."

The scales tipped somewhat at this statement. Mrs. Winterhead went down a trifle. Of course there were microbes; everybody knew that microbes existed, Libra reflected; and how in the world was it possible for an intelligent woman to make so foolish a statement? But the girl was loyal, and she simply said:

"I love your mother very dearly and have great confidence in her. She would never

teach me anything that would not be good for me."

"What a strange existence this is!" the girl thought as she sought the house of the adept, as some people called him.

"Here am I about to do something that the man I am going to marry would never forgive me for doing if he knew it, and I am not sure but my mother would drive me out of the house if she were to find it out. But I believe I should make this visit if I knew these calamities were to befall me. What is it that constantly impels me to seek for a hidden truth? It was always so, and shall I never be satisfied?"

Helen was waiting at a convenient picture-gallery for her friend,—Helen Lester, tall, handsome, vital, strong. She was the perfect opposite of her companion, having large dark eyes and a brilliant brunette complexion. She did not look as if she would ever be likely to die of love for any man, and yet something between the lines of her bright letter had convinced Libra that this love quest was anything but a comedy. And she

was in love with Dick, and he, to quote his own words "couldn't bear her."

"I'm all of a tremble," were her first words. "Aren't you?"

"My conscience is troubling me a little," Libra answered. "You see I am undecided as to the right and wrong of it."

"That doesn't bother me in the least," said Helen, with a pretty toss of her head. "It is nobody's business but my own. But if this teacher should see something in my mind, and tell me to give it up, I believe I should go home and hang myself."

"I never could understand why people killed themselves at home or in hotels, when there were rivers convenient. It must make it very unpleasant for the guests and the families," said Libra, with a loving squeeze of her friend's arm.

"Oh, you can make fun of others—of course you have the right—you who are engaged to the man you love, and everything going as if it were oiled. But I have troubles, Elizabeth, genuine ones, none of your imaginative nonsense, and I want to get rid of them."

"And do you think this man will speak peace to your heart?" Libra asked.

"I only expect that he will give me more to think of, more difficult nuts to crack, than I ever had before," she added sadly.

As they reached the house Libra noticed a familiar figure descending the steps. It was the minister whom she had called upon some months before. Helen's people were members of his church, and Libra was not surprised at the flush and annoyed expression which overspread his handsome face.

Helen was equal to the occasion.

"Oh, Mr. Harkness," she exclaimed, "isn't this jolly? You needn't have another qualm of conscience, Elizabeth, for if it is right for a minister to visit this man, it certainly cannot be wrong for us. Tell us something about him, Mr. Harkness. Is he really so remarkable?"

"He is a friend of mine, Miss Helen, and a great help to those who have sufficient spiritual insight to understand him. Do not imagine that he is any sense a fortune teller or a reader of the future. If you are calling

with that idea you will be very much disappointed. We met when I was abroad, and I claim to know something about him."

Libra had not yet spoken, though she had cordially shaken hands with the gentleman. Now she remarked sorrowfully, "Perhaps I had better turn back. If it depends upon spiritual insight there is no use in my wasting the man's time."

"I should select you as the one of all others, Miss Eastman, to find something profitable in an interview with my friend. I recall with great pleasure our little chat and should be very glad to see you again before long, if you can make it convenient."

"He must be getting clairvoyant," said Helen drily, "for didn't he size me up well? That man has thrown a whole bucket of cold water over me, and I feel now as if I were going to a funeral."

"Come on," said Libra as the door opened to their summons, and a moment more found them in the presence of a tall, pale, elderly gentleman, of most distinguished appearance. His eyes were dark and piercing, but

his countenance was as unruffled as an infant's in sleep. There were other visitors present, and beyond a few words of welcome from the host, nothing especial was said to either of them for some time. It seemed a singularly informal meeting. Questions were asked by the visitors on subjects that the girls had never even heard mentioned. Domains and triplicities, gems and colors, were words frequently upon their lips, as well as many other new and surprising terms. Libra listened with her whole soul, but Helen soon grew restless, and at the first opportunity said to her companion:

"Did you ever hear such stuff? I don't believe we shall get a single thing."

At last the teacher in illustration of an interesting point brought forward by one of the visitors remarked:

"There are nine of us here, and I feel sure there are but two who belong to the domain of air—that young lady"—pointing to Elizabeth—"and myself." Then lifting her card from the table he said politely, "Miss Eastman, I believe?"

"Yes," was the puzzled answer, "but I do not understand what you mean by the domain of air?"

"You are an October child, are you not?" the gentleman inquired.

"Yes, sir; but how did you know?"

The little audience smiled at the artlessness of the question, and the master turned a very gentle and sympathetic face to the eager girl. She felt the subtle, spiritual vibrations, and wondered at the great peace that had suddenly entered her heart.

"It is easy, my child, to tell in almost every case, but I could not make a mistake about you, because we are both in the same sign, Libra—the Scales."

"What does that mean?" the girl asked.

"It means the balance of the universe, the price deficient made up by the price that covers. It means Crux and Corona, the cross borne and the crown often delayed. It mean vacillation and impetuosity, a scattering of force which does not obtain in any of the other signs of the Zodiac."

"Since you have overcome these things, I

need not despair," said Libra, with a smile of infinite sweetness.

"Where I was educated," the master went on, "air natures were very much distrusted, although much beloved. These people are exceedingly receptive and very enthusiastic, but they are so easily influenced on account of their affections, and their overwhelming desire to please everybody, that they cannot always be depended upon to remain of the same mind long enough to glean from their training the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But when they do attain, when the scales are poised, they are reliable and exceedingly helpful. It is a difficult matter to balance the scales of character, and particularly so for those soaring, aspiring creatures who desire to fly high and wide, and who value their liberty above all things."

Elizabeth sat like one spellbound. She had heard her characteristics described with marvellous accuracy, and her wonder and delight were in equal proportions.

"I have a sister in Libra," a lady remarked at this point, "and your description fits her

exactly. Would it be proper for me to ask if such natives are apt to be happy in marriage?"

The teacher hesitated a moment and then said:

"The only answer I can make to this question is that they are not, because of their natural tendency to yield to importunity. Libra women aspire to a high order of conscientiousness, though they may not, and generally do not, live up to their own noble standards, and in an emergency they frequently sacrifice themselves upon the altar of duty, or what they consider such."

"Is not this a part of the necessary discipline?" Elizabeth asked.

"In the opinion of many teachers, yes; not so in mine. If development is impossible in any other manner, then we should welcome the blunders and mistakes that at last bring us to a knowledge of ourselves."

"But is there a single soul that escapes these awful experiences?" one of the little group inquired, earnestly.

"True spiritual education is the glad tidings of great joy to all the people," was the

answer. "The intellect has been trained for centuries to the highest pitch of culture and scholarship, and to the utter exclusion of the soul, the innermost, that part of us which is able to recognize God and which is God."

"Will it not take more centuries to change this condition?" Elizabeth asked.

"When properly presented, the truth comes to some persons in the twinkling of an eye," and the teacher looked searchingly at his young sky neighbor as if he strove to make sure that his impression of her was correct.

"Why should it be so much harder for air people to find their equilibrium than for those in other signs?" a lady asked.

"You belong to the earth, the positive sign of that triplicity, Taurus—the Bull——"

"What?" exclaimed the questioner in unfeigned horror and surprise.

"An excellent sign, as indeed they all are when the necessity of regeneration is understood and accepted," the teacher responded, gently. "You are contented with your material surroundings——"

The lady shook her head and sighed, and then said:

"You are mistaken in that statement."

"Your discontent arises from your inability to give as lavishly as you would wish of material things to your friends who are poorer than yourself."

"How could you know that?" she asked in evident bewilderment.

"It is perfectly simple. I have no corner on this science. Any one can understand and practise it as well as I if attention is given to it. Earnest study is all that is required. In your case, madam, there is no feeling of being out of your native element. You do not suffer from homesickness as do the air people, especially those who are born in the middle sign of that triplicity. You are at home, and with health and wealth you would be content, and would also radiate a great deal of happiness. The difference in the development of air and earth natives is this: The former are compelled in the regenerative process to learn to harmonize the two spheres, the external and the inner; to know that the

earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that the kingdom of heaven is within themselves and not in the sky where they constantly look. The lesson for the earth people is aspiration, a turning away from the things of sense, material pleasure, and ambition, to the only real things, those which are spiritually discerned."

"The processes seem nearly even," a gentleman remarked. "I should think that it would be about as difficult for a bird to plough as for a bull to fly."

There was a hearty laugh at this witticism, in which the teacher joined.

Then the latter said, as he turned his gaze upon Helen, to whom this conversation was an utterly foreign language:

"There is a fire child, a Leo native, I think—Miss Lester, were you born near the end of July?"

"The 26th of July," Helen replied, in a tone and manner quite unlike herself.

"That brings you on the cusp between Cancer and Leo, and places you also in the domain of water."

"You mean that I partake of the qualities or characteristics which you claim for these signs?" Helen asked, with an evident intention of gaining all the information possible.

"It is not my claim alone, please understand. By many scholars, ancient and modern, the stars are believed to be the first revelation of God to man. The book of Job, the oldest in the Bible, makes particular mention of this stellar language: 'Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?' In Egyptian temples are copies of zodiacs which must have been placed there more than three hundred years before Christ. So you see this is no work of the imagination, no false doctrine trumped up for the bewilderment of the people."

"I didn't intend to convey the impression you evidently caught," Helen explained, "but I am rather glad that such was the case, because I have always been very fond of the book of Job, and have wondered and wondered what those grand, magnificent statements could mean. But may I ask, please—

is not fire and water a very serious combination?"

"You have a great deal to do, my child, but the Lion is the king of beasts, and you will be brave. There is a tremendous clutch in Cancer, a determination to have what one desires at all hazards. This quality trained and toned down becomes the greatest of blessings, because it then only holds on to the things that are desirable, those which belong to one. I would especially advise you to unclutch at the present time. Loosen your hold and give your close attention to the subjects which will elevate your mind and help the world. Remember the words of Jesus Christ, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.' You must be lifted up."

The manner of the teacher was as serious as his words, and the tears came to Helen's eyes and almost overflowed them. She knew that he had read her dearest secret, and while she felt that she never could act upon his counsel, she was nevertheless helped and interested. A door had been opened into a chamber of whose existence she had never

before dreamed, and the suddenness of the light was indeed to her the "twinkling of an eye"—one moment complete darkness, the next dazzling light.

When after a while there was a lull in the conversation, Elizabeth asked if the teacher would give her some idea of the characteristics of a person born on the 4th of January.

"If a man"—the questioner fancied she saw a slight smile at the corners of the speaker's usually grave mouth—"and has had the benefit of good moral training and a good education, he is honest, exceedingly ambitious to excel in all material and intellectual ways, kind, loyal, and—and masterful. He is of the earth and loves the good things of the earth. He is probably a natural skeptic, if not a thorough materialist. He comes under the sign Capricorn, the last of the earth triplicity. His governing planet is Saturn, and should he be compelled to spend his life with one who from principle or obstinacy would not conform to his sovereign will, he would become silent and morose, a very uncomfortable person to live with—in

other words, saturnine. But he would hold a brave front to the world, for the pride of these natives is indomitable. If, on the contrary, this man has received early spiritual training and has learned to govern himself and the stars, there could not be found in all the twelve tribes of Israel a man more desirable as a neighbor, counsellor, friend, and husband."

There was a little more general conversation, and then the pleasant and helpful visit came to an end. Oh, how Libra longed to ask more questions, crave some advice that she could immediately act upon, but she was reluctant to prolong so generous an interview. At parting the girls were given some pamphlets on the subject which had so interested them, and as they passed out, the master said in a low tone to Libra, "Come if you need me, but try to work it out yourself. It is the dominant fault of your sign to lean on others. No one but yourself can solve your problem. Concentrate your thoughts every day once or twice, and find out what your higher self, which is the spirit of God, has

to say to you. You will find some directions for concentration in these little books. Remember that you are the Scales, and the scales must balance. God bless you both."

XIII.

"ELIZABETH, *do* you believe these things?"

The girls had walked some distance in perfect silence, each occupied with the remarkable messages they had received. "Just think of it! I am a lion and a crab, and were there ever two creatures more unlike? Does he mean that we must harmonize these antipodes of our nature before we can be what he calls regenerated? I never had the hysterics in my life, Elizabeth, but there is nothing that would suit my present mood so well as to sit down on those doorsteps and shriek."

"What for?" her companion asked quietly.

"Great heavens! how you have changed!" Helen exclaimed. "I can remember when you were as impulsive and volatile as I am—yes, and more so—and now you might as well be a graven image for all the interest or emotion that you show."

"All right, dear, but please answer my question—Why do you want to shriek?"

"Oh, I don't know," was the excited response. "I am cold and hot in the same breath. I am burning in my native fire and shivering in my native water. I don't believe that man, and I do trust him with all my soul. Isn't this a shriekable condition?"

"You have received more definite instructions than I have," Libra replied, "and you have reason to be thankful. I am left as usual without chart or compass, and am expected to get into port on time. Helen, if I had been told to give up something or hold on to something, I would have done it on the spot."

There was a sadness in Libra's voice that went straight to the heart of her friend. The latter realized for the first time that the girl she thought so changed was really carrying a very heavy cross, and she said, affectionately and with an intuitive sense of the real state of the case which was remarkable:

"Elizabeth, I have an idea, and I believe

it is valuable. The reason you were not told to let go or hold on was because that man knew you would do it, simply because he suggested it, and the reason he gave me specific advice was because he knew I wouldn't take it unless I wanted to."

"But I don't quite see——"

"Well, I do," interrupted Helen, "but I suppose it will be next to impossible to explain it as it comes to me. It would be an awful responsibility to advise you, because you would, as you say, act upon it immediately and then be sorry for it afterward, and perhaps go through life regretting that you had not done as you first intended. Ah, Elizabeth, that man may be one of the three wise ones, or even one more wise, for he knew to the core of their souls every person in that room this afternoon, but whether he found it out by the stars or not I don't know."

"Then you are not going to do as he told you?" Libra inquired.

"Well, it is about as if somebody had politely requested me to go home and cut my head off. Come to think of it, Elizabeth,

it's a very funny thing to be told to let go of something that one never had hold of."

"But you knew what he meant?"

"Worse luck, yes. Of course you think I ought to heed this counsel."

Libra hesitated a moment and then said, very earnestly:

"Yes, Helen; and I will tell you why. I have been thinking and observing and studying a little lately into spiritual things, and I have found out that the ones who do not strive and pull and haul are far more likely to get their heart's desires than those who do. I believe this to be a spiritual law. To say in your heart and mean it, 'Thy will be done; I desire only those things which shall be best for me and others,' is to place yourself where you cannot be hurt or disappointed, no matter what comes."

"Yes, honey," Helen replied, wistfully; "but don't you see that you are in the sky and I am in the red-hot flames? You can be cool because you have a cool environment, but a brimstone blaze, a clutching crab, and ice-cold water—just think of it!"

"Helen, if we make the stars an excuse for our wickedness and disobedience, this afternoon will prove the worst investment of time that we ever made or ever can make. By overcoming ourselves we overcome the stars. That is what we were definitely told a dozen times at least."

"Sound reasoning, I suppose, but tough," Helen responded.

"And then there is another side to the question," Libra resumed. "It is what might be called the diplomatic side, and which in your present mood may appeal to you more strongly than the other."

"Diplomatic?" exclaimed Helen.

"Yes; you want something that is out of your reach"—and after an eloquent pause—"so do others."

In this case no more pregnant sentence could possibly have been constructed. For a moment there was silence, and then Helen stopped short and looked searchingly into the face of her friend.

"*You* must be clairvoyant also," she said at last.

"I think I have clear sight on some subjects, and as I have hinted to you before, I really possess a conscience. Now I would like you to let go for the first reason I gave you and not for the last. The last is only an appearance; the first is a reality."

"Then you think, Elizabeth, that people are not apt to want the things that come to them easily? I believe you are right, for I remember when I was a child that I always scorned the cherries that were picked for me, and viewed with delight the highest limbs. Well, dear, between the teachings of the two saints that I have received this afternoon, I think I can truly say that I have had a dose. I believe I can safely promise that it's right-about face from this out; but to be honest with you, I'm bound to say that the second argument won the case."

Elizabeth was about to reply when her companion exclaimed suddenly: "Good gracious! there comes Mr. Winterhead! Is it mum or shall you tell him?"

"Not a word," said Libra, and then the trio were face to face. It was immediately

plain to Libra, who had made a careful study of her lover's countenance and manner for some time, that something had gone wrong. What, she could not imagine. They had parted amicably and even affectionately the night before, and it had been quite an unusual period since she had been called to task for any cause. Only one who either loved or feared would have detected this cloud. He was exceedingly polite to Helen and insisted upon walking home with her. Libra was weary by this time, for the girls had walked miles without the slightest realization of the distance they had covered. But she trudged on obediently, anxious, Libra-fashion, to find out what had caused the shadow which she realized so keenly.

The lovers were alone at last, and then Capricorn said, with considerable sternness:

"You evidently forgot your engagement to drive with me this afternoon."

"I couldn't have forgotten an engagement that never existed," Libra replied.

"You promised me this afternoon more

than a week ago," her companion persisted, in the same cold and disagreeable manner.

"I promised this afternoon to Helen more than a week ago," was the calm answer.

"Then you question my truthfulness, do you?"

Capricorn was nearer a genuine rage than Libra had ever seen him.

"I never could do that, Horace," she answered gently. "I will say that I have no recollection of any such engagement as you mention."

"That is what I said in the first place. You have forgotten it," was the hard response. "A man that is half a man, Elizabeth, does not easily forgive an offence of that kind."

To this remark there was no answer. A power which the girl had but lately recognized seemed to step to the front and close her lips.

"Haven't you anything to say?" the angry man asked after an awkward pause.

"I have said all I know how to say."

"You will find your mother very much disturbed," was the next unfortunate remark.

This was too much for his companion. Mirth came to her rescue and she laughed as merrily as a child.

"One would think that was something new," she said at last. "Why, mamma is chronically disturbed. She has been ill in that way ever since I knew her."

"She did not know you had left the house." This in a tone of stern rebuke.

"Why should she know?"

"Because she is your mother."

"She will be my mother when I am your wife. Shall I report to her then whenever I go out or come in?"

"Certainly not. That is very different. Her jurisdiction ends when in the marriage ceremony she gives you to me."

"Gives me to you?"

Libra's tones were full of scorn. It was evident that the gracious sweetness which had been her comforter and her refuge of late was being crowded out. The old sense

of wrong which she never could analyze or comprehend was again strong within her.

"What *am* I anyway?" she added, her fine eyes flashing and her cheeks aflame. "To all appearance a piece of goods to be tossed from one owner to another on the payment of a price. When my mother gives me to you? She will never do that, Horace, for she never owned me."

"But that is in the sacred ceremony."

"It'll never be in my ceremony."

"Elizabeth, you are crazy."

"There isn't a minister that lives who would dare to ask any one to give me away, for I should tell him beforehand to omit it."

"Elizabeth, you are getting very much excited. You may not be aware of it, but your voice is pitched upon a very shrill and unladylike key."

"And there is another clause that will be left out of my wedding ceremony, and that is the promise to obey," the girl went on without noticing her companion's last remark. "I desire to obey my God, but His is the only power in heaven or earth that I owe

obedience to. I may be a wife, but I'll promise to be no man's slave, neither will I be a part of his goods or chattels."

"You will think better of this," said Capricorn, quite mildly.

"Never."

"Well, we will not talk any more about it to-day. I am exceedingly sorry that this discussion should come up."

"Don't let it come up again," said Libra, "because I warn you that it contains earthquakes and cyclones. I was never in my life tempted to swear until I heard those words, 'You promise to obey,' and 'Who giveth this woman,' etc., and I beg you to believe that the spirit of profanity is still rife within me and I may break out at any minute."

This was an entirely new and certainly most unexpected revelation of character. Capricorn fairly held his breath. It seemed to him that the lovely girl had never been half so beautiful. Her eyes shone like sapphires, and the pose of her classic head was something to delight the heart of an artist.

But what was to be done? Something, and very quickly too, for they had nearly reached the house, and to part under such circumstances was perhaps to make a lasting breach. Our lover was a natural tactician, and now his admiration for the queenly woman beside him so far exceeded his chagrin and ill-temper that he was willing to postpone the inevitable day of bringing her to terms. She must be smoothed down now like any other excited creature and taught better afterward. So he said, very pleasantly: "You are quite tired out with your walk, Elizabeth, and I am sure you will feel better after a little rest. I will go in with you, dear, if you are kind enough to permit me, and explain my mistake to your mother."

By this time Libra was ready to cry, but she drove back the tears and tried to make a gracious answer. This was the first time that the concession had not been made by herself, but this fact did not comfort her in the least. She was too mortified, too disgusted with her own fall from grace to extract any pleasure from her companion's

change of base. "What should she do?" she asked herself in bitterness of spirit. She realized that she was sorry and yet not in the least repentant. What right had this man to such an assumption of authority? And yet as girls always had been given away by somebody and had generally promised to obey, what right had she to defy all custom as well as the commands of Holy Writ?

The scales were now in a lamentable state of agitation, and the sorely tried native of the air had at this moment but one desire—to fly away and leave forever these troublesome and inexplicable conditions.

Mrs. Eastman and Dick were in the library and evidently engaged in an interesting if not a stormy discussion, when the silent and crestfallen pair entered the room. This was an entirely new rôle for Capricorn to assume. He was positive that the engagement to drive had been made and that Elizabeth had forgotten it. He had been to a great deal of pains to leave his office early and punctually meet the appointment, and now in order to restore harmony between himself

and the girl who had so fascinated him, he must not only step down from his high estate of manly authority, but he must lend himself to a falsehood, and Capricorn did not like to lie or in the least dissemble. He was as honest as the light and as masterful as the Czar of all the Russias.

"Here is our wanderer, Mrs. Eastman," he remarked with well-feigned satisfaction with himself and all the world, "and I just ran in a moment to say that I made a great mistake. Our engagement to drive was not for to-day."

"Horace is very good, mamma, to take all the blame upon himself," said Libra, whose cheeks were still burning and whose voice trembled a little; "but he should have said that I had no remembrance of any such engagement, and that he knows me to be loyal to my word."

"Well, it is all right anyway," Capricorn hurried to put in before Mrs. Eastman could get an opportunity to further stir up the still excited girl. He hated scenes, and saw no need of them.

"Of course I knew Elizabeth would not be guilty of so flagrant a breach of etiquette as to leave the house when expecting you, but it grieved me very much to think that she possibly could have forgotten so important an appointment. And now," changing her tone to one of the utmost cordiality, "you must really stay and dine with us. I insist upon it."

There was a fine opportunity for Mrs. Eastman to step on her daughter's toe at this point, of which she availed herself.

"Of course you will stay, Horace," the girl very sweetly remarked, wishing with all her heart that he would decline. But no, he was delighted to remain and so expressed himself. The cage door had closed again, and the longing, quivering heart of Libra was doomed to several hours more of slow torture. This evening she had fondly hoped would be her very own to spend in her room thinking over the wonderful events of the day, but as usual her mother had inserted her marplot finger into the delicate skein and spoiled and tangled everything.

Very gracefully and graciously Libra ex-

cused herself to dress for dinner, determined to find in a few moments' silence the peace and rest which would enable her to endure the remainder of the evening. But in this hope she was again disappointed. Courtesy demanded a quick toilet, and who ever found peace in the processes of dressing?

As she left her room to go downstairs, she heard Dick in his apartment and knocked for admittance.

"I was just coming to you," he said. "Do you know, Elizabeth, I am so infernally mad——"

"Yes, Dickie, I know. A deaf, dumb, and blind man could perceive that; but don't let's talk about it now. There isn't time. Instead, dear, I want you to take me on your knee and hug me for one minute, just as papa used to do!"

"You blessed child," said the young man with his whole soul in his voice, and the words and tone were so like the father's, and the strength and tenderness of the encircling arms so comforting, that the weary girl was immediately soothed and rested.

"It was just love that I needed," she whispered from her sheltered retreat. "Now I can go downstairs and do my whole duty."

It is no shame to Richard to say that the soft hair of his sister was sprinkled with his tears.

XIV.

It would have been impossible for a man possessed of five good common senses—and Horace Winterhead had these—not to know that there was something askew in his relations with the girl to whom he was betrothed. It did not occur to him that he was in any way responsible for the condition of affairs. From the very first, he told himself, he had been more of a father than a lover to Elizabeth. She was so impulsive, so regardless of the customs of good society, that it had been absolutely necessary for him to give her the benefit of his superior knowledge and experience.

This instruction had not always been well received. He supposed that it was one of the weaknesses of women that they did not like to be advised. Once in his vexation he had told her that she ought to live in Arcadia, where there were no social laws and the

people wore flowing white robes and sipped nectar.

The response was discouraging:

"You are right," she said very sweetly. "Just think of a place, Horace, where receptions and party calls are unknown, and where one can wear a graceful, flowing robe. It is excruciating to be doomed to bones and steels and what dressmakers call fits. I guess I have had more fits trying on dresses than the majority of epileptics have had in a lifetime."

"But most young ladies like fine clothes," the discomfited Capricorn had replied.

"Why, I like them, Horace," was the enthusiastic answer, "but I do not like the clothes that other people wear. I warn you that I am very extravagant in my tastes. I always choose the softest and fleeciest and most expensive goods, but the pity of it is that I can never have them made as I wish. I have two tyrants—my mother and my dressmaker."

If Capricorn had not been so wedded to the ways of the world he would have recognized

the exquisite ability of this beautiful girl to plan her own costumes, and with his overweening desire to place his wife in the very first ranks of an admiring circle, he would have looked forward with pleasure to the sensation she would create by the exercise of her really remarkable talent.

Another thing that seriously disturbed this young man was Libra's restlessness. When listening to music she was so still that he hardly dared to speak to her. In general conversation or when alone with him she was rarely ever reposeful. Had this untranquil condition savored the least of awkwardness, Capricorn would scarcely have thought the girl worth saving. But Libra was always graceful even in her most reckless and restless moods.

One very rainy evening, when the elder Winterhead had an engagement at the club, Capricorn, with nothing especial on hand, sought the society of his mother. On account of the inclement weather he would doubtless have an undisturbed field, and perhaps by the exercise of a little diplomacy he

might become possessed of some points that would be of use to him.

Mrs. Winterhead was busily engaged reading when her son entered the cozy library.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" she remarked, looking up with a smile and immediately resuming her magazine.

"Yes," said Capricorn. "I thought I would spend this evening with you," and then added, as his companion simply smiled and nodded, "I fear, however, that I have chosen the wrong time."

"Fudge!" said the lady. "Here," tossing him an uncut journal, "look over that for a moment until I finish this article."

This was scant courtesy, our young man thought. It was not very often that he favored his mother with his society, and he felt that the least she could do was to show some slight appreciation of his desire to be with her.

Mrs. Winterhead took her time and read slowly and carefully to the last word. Then she closed the book and placed it upon the

table, remarking as she did so, "An excellent paper; really very good, indeed."

"What is it about?" Capricorn inquired, more to start conversation than for any interest he had in the matter.

"It is called 'The Kingdom of God,'" the lady answered.

"I suppose the author thinks he knows all about it," her companion responded, testily.

"I don't know about *all*. He evidently felt that he knew something about it or he wouldn't have written the article."

"It appears to me if there is a God, which of course no person of real, good, common sense believes, He must be amused at the disposition which is made of Him."

"I think so."

"I thought you believed in God."

"And had not real, good, common sense?"

Mrs. Winterhead had a merry laugh and a laughing eye, and the face which she turned to her son at this point was most interesting.

"Oh, well, I didn't mean that exactly," Capricorn answered; "but, mother, when we reflect that science put an end to God

years ago, is it not pitiful that so many people are to be found who pretend to worship Him?"

"Yes, it is, Horace, and pitiful in the extreme that you should come in and find your mother reading about the kingdom of God."

"I can usually follow you, mother," said the young man, his whole manner expressing extreme annoyance, "but I am obliged to confess that in this instance I do not understand you."

"Simply because you do not understand yourself."

"This remark is equally as enigmatical as the other ones."

"If you understood yourself even a little bit, Horace, you would have some comprehension of God."

"I thought a moment ago that you disclaimed the idea of God."

"Not at all. I believe in God because I believe in man, and I believe in man because I believe in God."

"You will be saying next, like some other egotists I have heard of, that man is God."

"I say it now. Man is God, and God is man. They are one and indivisible. There could be no God without man, for man is God's expression; and there could be no man without God, for man is God's spirit."

"I think you would be judged insane by those very points, mother. Indeed, I have no doubt that if a committee were appointed to examine you as to your sanity, and you said to them what you have said to me, they would be unanimous in their opinion."

"Not in this age. Why, my dear boy, you seem to have been living in the backwoods. I would advise you to make for a clearing and open your eyes and look about you."

"Then you mean to tell me that I am God?"

"I mean to tell you that you and your Father are one, exactly as Jesus Christ and His Father were one. Jesus Christ recognized this fact and you do not. That is the difference."

"Did you ever talk with Elizabeth on these subjects?"

"Yes."

The upward inflection and interrogative tone of this little affirmative expressed a great deal. It said, "Certainly," "Of course," "What have you got to say about it?" "Why not?" and various other things.

"You must have known, mother, that such a course would be very displeasing to me, and you ought to have known that it would be very demoralizing to Elizabeth."

The man's face was set and his voice constrained. It was evidently all he could do to keep his temper in check.

Mrs. Winterhead did not respond at once, and her son had time to add the following very aggravating words:

"I am sure I do not see what could have been your object."

It was difficult for a Sagittarius native to ignore a remark of this sort, but Mrs. Winterhead had worked very hard to overcome her natural tendency to strike back, and could now be called a conqueror.

"The first part of your remark, Horace, is scarcely worth replying to, for you are aware that I have never stood in the slightest fear

of your displeasure. You commenced your efforts at mastering your mother in babyhood, but they have never been crowned with success. So we can dismiss your displeasure. What you say about Elizabeth holds an accusation which only a very angry and a very domineering man could have made to his mother. You evidently expect that you are going to mould Elizabeth to your will."

"I don't think, mother, that you have the least idea how terribly aggravating you are. I did speak hastily and I beg your pardon, but the fact is I came to you this evening to ask your advice about my affairs, to see if you might not be able to help me a bit."

"I shall be very glad to be of service," Mrs. Winterhead replied. "You have an assurance, my dear boy, that I shall be frank with you."

"If we did not disagree so vitally in everything—I wonder why it is?" the young man queried.

Mrs. Winterhead smiled.

"I think I can explain that later," she

said. "Tell me now, please, what you would like me to do for you."

"Mother, I know that Elizabeth loves me. I have every reason for that confidence. I know that she wants to be my wife, for she has told me so many times, and she is as truthful a girl as ever lived. But she is not willing—she is not willing——"

Capricorn rarely ever floundered in his speech, but one glance at his mother's face had been sufficient to throw him completely overboard.

"I can't see what you are smiling about," he added helplessly and angrily.

"Never chide a woman for smiling, Horace."

"But you looked so superior, just as if you knew everything I was going to say and condemned it in advance."

"Intuitive people are equal to the first feat you mention, but only prejudiced ones are ever guilty of the last. I do not belong in that category. You would do well to go on, Horace, because we may be interrupted before long."

"Well, to begin with," Capricorn began after a pause, "I cannot induce Elizabeth to mention the date of our marriage. She does not seem to see that it is absolutely essential she should, although I have told her several times that a business man cannot leave the city for two months without preparation. I have talked with her mother about it——"

Sagittarius tossed her shapely head and Capricorn paused, expecting her to speak.

"Well?" she said.

"All right—go ahead! I was thinking—that's all."

"Mrs. Eastman tells me that everything is all right, but when I speak to Elizabeth, she is as silent as the sphinx."

"May I ask, Horace, why you desire to hurry up your wedding? Someway, such haste does not seem consistent with your usual manner of doing things."

"On this point we can perfectly agree. It is not consistent, but a wise man governs himself by circumstances."

"No, he does not," Mrs. Winterhead interrupted. "He governs circumstances."

There was a slight pause here. Evidently Mrs. Winterhead was momentarily becoming a more complex conundrum to her son.

"You see, mother," Capricorn began again, "Elizabeth needs some one to take care of her——"

"A great mistake, my son. Elizabeth needs to know how to take care of herself," his companion again broke in. "When she has mastered that art she will be a good deal more fit to be a wife than she is to-day."

"Why, mother, I thought you liked Elizabeth."

"I am devotedly attached to her."

"And yet you think she will not make me a good wife?"

Mrs. Winterhead was in very deep water now. What should she do, she asked herself. Swim out and leave those she cared for to battle with the waves, or remain and try to help them? The inability of this man to understand what she did mean was so discouraging for the moment that the anxious mother felt almost inclined to give the whole thing up. It did not seem possible that any-

thing she could say or do would have the slightest beneficial effect, for Horace was spiritually deaf, dumb, and blind. In the present stage of his development it was not likely that her higher view would make an impression. Still, it was her duty to state it as kindly and wisely as she could and leave the result. All the seed might not fall on to rocky places. So the courageous woman picked up her spiritualized bow and arrow again and prepared to aim in such a manner that it would do as little harm as possible.

"You had a course of logic when you were in college, Horace," she said at last, "and if I remember correctly you carried off the honors. It seems to me it would be advisable to apply some of the principles now."

"Logic and women are antipodal subjects, mother. No power in the universe could ever bring them together," Capricorn replied with the utmost gravity.

Mrs. Winterhead took no notice of this remark.

"I do not know how to put the statements into syllogistic form," she resumed, "but I

mean exactly what I said. The woman who needs some one to take care of her, to think for her, plan for her, direct all her movements, as you seem to think it will be necessary for you to do for Elizabeth, cannot make a satisfactory wife. You are talking about a puppet, Horace, not a helpmeet. And then, Horace, did it ever occur to you that Elizabeth Eastman may not know her own mind?"

"Do you mean to suggest that she may not want to marry me?"

The young man's tones were wrathful, and his mother understood that he was ready to dispute this point valiantly.

"I am afraid, my boy, that I shall be compelled to give you up as a hopeless case. You ask me questions and resent my answers. I think I will sum up what I have to say in these words: If I were in your place I would not pester Elizabeth any more about naming the day of the wedding, and I would also call her mother off. I have no wish to prejudice you against your future mother-in-law, but how under the heavens Elizabeth

has grown to be the beautiful woman she is with such a parent, has come to be my stock conundrum. When I wake up in the night I find myself guessing away at it. It is getting to be real fascinating."

"Mother, why do you advise this course?"

"Horace Winterhead, I shall be brutal before long if you keep on asking questions and refusing to understand me. I'll tell you one reason. If I were a man I should want the girl I had chosen for my wife to have an equal interest with myself in the wedding day."

"I am sure Elizabeth has," was the positive answer, "but she does not want to be married so soon."

"Then in the name of common sense, why don't you let her have her way?"

"Will you kindly tell me why I should not have my way?"

"Because it isn't manly."

The arrow struck deep that time, but Sagittarius was past caring. The spiritual unresponsiveness and sublime egotism of her companion had tried her almost beyond en-

durance. Ephraim was certainly joined to his idols, and it were better to let him alone.

After a moment or two of silence, the young man rose and walked toward the door. With his hand upon the knob he remarked: "I do not remember, mother, of any time in our lives that we ever came so near quarrelling."

Mrs. Winterhead did not move from her seat nor make the slightest effort to detain him. She said simply: "Call it what you please, Horace. I have answered your questions to the best of my ability."

The coolness of the speaker and her readiness to terminate the interview had evidently an exasperating effect, for Capricorn strode back into the room, and with his hand upon his breast confronted his companion.

"But think, mother, of what you said! I, your son, unmanly! I certainly never expected that of you."

"And I never should have said it if you had not deserved it. Any man that hurries a woman into matrimony against her will is not manly, and he is not only not manly,

but he is crazy. You don't know what thoughts are in the mind of the girl you seek to make your wife."

"But I have a right to know, mother," Capricorn interrupted hotly. "Do try and look at this matter sensibly. I can spare time for a long vacation far better at the time I have set for our wedding than at any other during the year. I have placed this matter before Elizabeth in the kindest and most practical manner."

"Haven't you eyes to see, Horace, that there is nothing utilitarian or practical about Elizabeth? In the very outset of your career you show her that you want to make a convenience of her, are willing to sacrifice her to the exigencies of your business. She may not tell you so, but there is something in her that protests against such a disposition of her life."

"Would you have protested against it?"

"Yes, *sir*. If your father had asked me to hurry up my preparations for such a reason, you wouldn't be calling me mother to-night. I'll tell you that plainly."

"Then in your opinion there should be no practical basis for marriage?"

"Your practicality, Horace, savors of compulsion, and let me tell you now that will never do with such a woman as Elizabeth. There are some who would neither see the iron will nor mind it, and some fools of girls who would like it, but not Elizabeth."

"You seem to have made a study of her," said Capricorn, with fine sarcasm.

"Yes, and a beautiful study it has been."

"I think I ought to apologize for having interrupted your pleasant evening," said the young man after another painful pause; "but I came with an excellent intention, mother. Naturally," he went on, as there was no response, "I cannot understand how after our years of what might almost be called perfect harmony, we should disagree so radically at this time."

Mrs. Winterhead arose now and confronted her companion. Her fine face was aglow with feeling and her eyes shone like stars.

"My son," she said, "there was never a

woman in the case before. I have always hoped that by the time you chose a wife you would have learned to govern your will, to understand that you cannot dominate everything and everybody as has been your habit in the past. Up to date, Horace, you have been wonderfully successful in all your undertakings, but let me tell you that your life will be a sorry one if you attempt to coerce such a woman as Elizabeth. She may or may not yield to your rule. If she does not, Tophet is before you. If she does, it will kill her. I know your power, Horace," as the young man attempted to protest, "and I believe I am the only one who has ever been able to withstand it, the only one who has ever dared to tell you the honest truth about yourself."

"I did not know that I was such a brute in my mother's eyes."

"You have all the external virtues, my dear boy, but you have not yet been awakened by the spirit. Elizabeth has. That is the difference between you."

"That is all Greek to me, mother."

"You will translate it some time, Horace. Through what process, God only knows."

"I think you said something about there being a reason for our difference of opinion on almost every subject," Capricorn remarked, apparently a little softened by the sweet influence which he could not fail to feel.

Mrs. Winterhead hesitated a moment, and then, as her countenance changed from grave to mirthful, she said:

"You were born in the domain of Earth, Horace, and your feet are firmly planted on the ground——"

"Where else is there to be born?" her companion interrupted.

"I was born in the domain of Fire," was the smiling response, "and that is what makes me equal to you. Elizabeth is a native of the Air, and that is why she is so far away and so full of fancies."

"Excuse me, mother, but that is all infernal nonsense. I suppose that is astrology—zodiac business."

"Just so, dear. I am Sagittarius the

Archer, Elizabeth is Libra the Scales, and you are Capricorn the Goat."

"A goat?" exclaimed the astounded man. "Mother, you have lost your senses. Does Elizabeth know of these things?"

"I don't know what she knows."

"Well, I forbid——"

"Have a care, my boy—go slow," the lady interrupted.

"But, mother——"

Just at this crisis Mr. Winterhead entered the room, and Horace, with a curt good-evening, stalked out of the apartment.

"What's the matter with him?" the newcomer inquired.

"He has just found out that he is a goat," was the laughing reply.

XV.

One of the most mischievous tendencies of the average Libra nature is its fancied responsibility for the happiness of others. Is inharmony rampant in the family? Libra must have caused it. She may have been as innocent of intentional harm as an angel and cannot herself detect, by the most careful analysis of the situation, the slightest complicity in the trouble, yet she feels that, if it had not been for her, the thing would never have happened.

If, on the other hand, Libra is wrongfully accused, she is as indifferent to the accusation as a bird in the air. The apparent contradictions of this sign are most puzzling.

Elizabeth Eastman as an exponent of this constellation was having a very hard time. Why she should feel responsible for the comfort and well-being of her mother, her intended husband, and her brother, she often

asked herself, but never succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory answer. Nevertheless the fact remained that she was, if for no other reason than that they all considered her so. Their attitude toward her was certainly of this sort, and it is no wonder that the girl was confused and distressed. She was well aware that Mrs. Winterhead and Richard would like to have the engagement broken, but the majority in the families were anxious to have the marriage take place as speedily as possible. Libra could not satisfy them all, and yet she felt it her bounden duty to do so. She could not marry and not marry. She could not go with her husband and still live with Dick. With shame she confessed to her own heart that she would be glad to leave her mother; and there were times when she felt as if she would make any personal sacrifice to be rid of the maternal nagging which opened and closed almost every day of the girl's life. In the midst of these objective and subjective complications had entered the new, strange, spiritual, and occult thought which fascinated her beyond

expression. A genuine Libra ever wishes to share her pleasures, but these new ideas, beautiful and lifting though they were to her, seemed to be incendiary if not disgraceful subjects to most people, and so she had no real companionship in those things that were calculated to strengthen and elevate. Helen she saw only occasionally, and she so keenly felt the attitude of Horace to his mother that she could not really enjoy the rare interviews with Mrs. Winterhead.

Mrs. Eastman was an orderly woman, one of those who look ahead and plan and arrange even to the minutest detail. From earliest childhood Elizabeth had been a very great trial in these mathematical respects, and now at a time when a girl was expected to have common sense, she was more unreasonable and erratic than ever. From the strictly human and external side, this aggravated and aggravating lady had ample reason for complaint. The new attitude of silent respect that Libra had assumed in obedience to the call of the spirit was more un-

welcome to the mother than open revolt. There was some satisfaction in dealing with a companion who would argue and dispute, but not any with one who would listen and keep silent.

"One never knows what a sulky girl will do," Mrs. Eastman remarked to her son one day after a particularly disagreeable morning with Libra.

"Whom are you calling sulky?" the young man inquired in an irritable tone.

"You know very well, Richard," the lady responded, almost if not quite ready to burst into tears. "You don't know how disrespectful your sister is to me."

"I don't see why Lib isn't a devil," was the expressive response. "Why don't you let up on her, mother?"

"Let up on her? That's a beautiful expression. I don't believe there ever was a woman in this wide world who was so tried and tormented and disappointed as I am. And in both my children, too! Most mothers have one in the family that they can cling to and expect sympathy from, but I

am entirely alone. Let up on her! I shall not forget that in a hurry."

"You seem to understand the expression," said Dick, "and that is the main point to be attained in any language. I say, mother, that if you want peace with Elizabeth you had better let up on her. You have sawed away at her mouth till it's so tender she can't open it, and then you call her sulky. Why don't you quit talking about the wedding and quit singing the praises of that Episcopal prig, Horace Winterhead? She'll find him out fast enough without any of your posting, if she has not already done so."

"Episcopal prig!"

Mrs. Eastman's white hands and white cuffs were in the air now, and the words, so tragically articulated, sounded so funny that Dick forgot his annoyance and burst out laughing.

"Episcopal prig!" Mrs. Eastman repeated. "And I have come to this, come to hearing my son ridicule religion and the sacred things of the Church, to say nothing of abus-

ing one of the finest and most upright men that ever lived. Episcopal prig!"

Dick was still laughing, but he stopped long enough to say that any young fellow who cared nothing at all for religion and who owned a whole pew in an aristocratic church just for the looks of the thing and for the help it might be to his business and his social life, was an Episcopal prig, and it wasn't calling him out of his name, either.

"Oh, Richard, Richard!" replied the despairing woman, "how little you know of real character! Horace has talked to me of religion by the hour. Can you find fault with his morals? Can you pick a flaw in his business career? Does he not always pay his debts, and is not that religion, Richard Eastman?"

"No, sirree," said Dick, in his excitement adding fuel to fire.

"I'm no horse jockey," interrupted his mother, her right arm in the air again; but Dick did not notice her protest. He felt that for once in his life he had something to say that was good for his companion to hear.

"Morality is not religion, mother, and young as I am and unregenerate as I am, I know better than that. I honestly believe that one may keep all the moral laws and be a renegade at heart. Now, mind you, I'm not even hinting that Horace Winterhead is a renegade, but I do say that the man who does not believe in a God and a future life is not a Christian."

"Horace investigates things scientifically. To him science says nothing of a future life or a personal deity——"

"Then what in thunder does he have a pew in the Episcopal church for?" broke in Dick.

"Why, because — because —" stammered his companion.

"Because he is fond of the music."

Libra had entered at this point, and in her sweetest manner responded to the belligerent question. "They had some splendid music there last Sunday. It was almost as good as an oratorio."

With a deep sigh Mrs. Eastman silently left the room. Elizabeth had for once ap-

peared at the right moment and helped her out of a disagreeable position.

"Oh, Dickie, Dickie, what's the use?" Libra inquired sadly.

"No use."

"Then what do you do it for?"

"Do you think I'm going to sit dumb and allow mother to call you sulky and make a canonized saint out of Horace Winterhead?"

"I don't care what she calls me, so please don't fight my battles; and I should think it would delight your heart to know that there is one person upon the face of the earth whom mamma thoroughly approves of. Really and truly, my dear, something or somebody will have to give way or I shall do something desperate."

"You cannot possibly do anything more desperate than to marry Horace Winterhead. You couldn't if you sat up nights to plan it."

"Upon my word," and now Libra forced a laugh, "anybody would think, to hear you talk, that Horace was a fiend in human shape. Now you know he is a gentleman and exceedingly intelligent. He is cer-

tainly very much in love with me, and I cannot see why you should harden your heart against him."

"Answer me one question. Have you been happy a single day since you were engaged to him?"

"Was I ever happy a single day before I was engaged to him?"

"Judging from appearances, yes, very happy. You used to be the life of the house and all of our parties and balls. You used to dance and sing and play, and make everybody about you have a fine time. Now you are reserved and terribly preoccupied. I don't know how you act when you and your lover are together, but, by George! I can't think of anything but moonstruck when I glance at you now, never mind where you are."

"Oh, Dick! is it as bad as that?"

The girl felt no resentment. She knew that her brother was speaking the honest thoughts of his loving heart.

"Yes, and I wouldn't care quite so much if I didn't know that some people thought

you were so dead in love with Winterhead that you had neither eyes nor ears for any one else. It is bad enough as it is, but that phase of the matter makes me mad."

"Well, Dickie, the way I seem to be to these people is the way I ought to be. At least, that is what such authorities as mamma and a few like her tell me. But, Dick, I am thinking of a lot of things, and trying to find out where I am and who I am. These are awful conundrums, and they make me appear reserved and *distrait*, I suppose; but I will try my best to behave better in future; and then, Dick," the girl added, with both hands in her brother's, "if you had mamma all the days as I have, you'd look as if you were moonstruck."

"I believe your story," said Dick drily, and added, "I've been wondering what sign of the Zodiac she was born under."

"And so you have turned star reader?" Libra exclaimed.

"Yes, I went with some of the boys last night to see that famous astrologer, or whatever you call him. I was never so inter-

ested in my life. Of course he sets one impossible tasks, but he believes what he says himself, and that's more than some of the ministers do. I am Gemini the Twins," and Dick drew himself up with mock dignity. "Castor and Pollux, if you please. I always felt that there was more than one of me. Now I know it. I gave your birthday, and the old gentleman said you were a Libra native and my next-door sky neighbor. That's what makes us love each other so, I guess. Say, I'm going to join a class that the old gentleman has once a week, and you bet I'll find out lots of things. But where do you think mother stands in the Zodiac?"

"We haven't any family Bible record as most families have, and I never knew her to have a birthday."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I don't find out some way," Dick replied. "There must be some sign which means that people born under it are determined to have their own way in spite of everything."

"I imagine that this quality can be found in every sign. Most of the people whom I

know want their own way. I do, and you do, Dickie, and we are often very mean and disagreeable because we cannot have it. Really, we do not have patience enough with mamma. Just think what a tender and discreet nurse she is when we are ill. At such times there is no sacrifice too great. Did you ever know her, Dick, to lose patience even—even with you?"

"When a fellow's in bed, that woman is an angel; but as soon as he's able to put his shoes on, heaven help him! Oh, Lib, the days that I've made believe sick when I was a boy in order to come in touch with the mother-love!"

"And I, too, when I was a girl. I'm sometimes tempted to do it now. To tell you the truth, dear," she added sadly, "it was not so very long ago that I feigned a racking headache in order to secure a little peace and comfort for myself, but that can never be done again."

"I fail to see why it cannot be done. If I were you I'd have nervous prostration for the next three months."

Libra smiled, but there was a look on the sweet face which her brother had never observed until lately and which he did not in the least understand. It seemed to him to betoken the renunciation of all things. Richard always turned away from the pictures of saints. They troubled and awed him.

"I don't think it would be a bit wrong," he added tentatively. "Something might happen in three months, you know."

"I have shirked and turned corners as long as I am allowed to," Libra replied.

"Allowed to? Who allows and who prevents, I should like to be informed?" her companion interrupted.

"Just the God in myself, Dickie, the divine voice that of late perpetually calls to me, Which will you choose, which will you choose—wisdom or folly, truth or falsehood? I have found out one thing, and it is a very valuable thing to know, dear——"

"You don't look as if there was very much fun in it," the young man broke in again. "Funerals are valuable because they are necessary, but they can't be called inspiring."

"That's true," said Libra, and then she was silent so long that Dick grew more and more worried and impatient.

"Why don't you tell me what it is?" he blurted out at last. "If it is good for you, it ought to be for me, I should think."

"Yes, dear, but it is very, very hard. It is, to tell the absolute truth, always, no matter what the stress or the occasion. You have no idea of the wonderful things that are included in this principle. The person who can do this without fear or favor cannot fail to develop his or her individuality, and that I am convinced must be done some time somewhere. Now isn't it worth while, if one perfectly comprehends that certain things must be done, to get at them and do them as quickly and as thoroughly as possible?"

"That's the way that old duffer talked the other night," Richard remarked. "He seemed to get his philosophy out of the stars, but it sounded remarkably orthodox to me. He did not say, believe in God and be saved, and believe not and be damned, but it amounted to the same thing."

"If you believe not, you are damned, right here and now—condemned—and of what? Of ignorance, Dick, and ignorance is the only devil there is in the world. You see, I realize all these truths intellectually, and the change you see in me is born of my endeavor to comprehend them in my heart. It's one thing to swallow your food and quite another to digest and assimilate it."

"I believe I abhor metaphysics!" Dick exclaimed after a pause.

"There is nothing metaphysical in what I have been saying. They are plain spiritual truths—at least they are plain to me—in my head."

"For mercy's sake, Elizabeth, don't get too knowledgeable and too angelic," Dick remarked more lightly. "Folks have been known to get off their base by dwelling too much on such subjects."

"Do you remember what papa used to say when we talked about going crazy over our studies? 'You needn't have the slightest apprehension, my child. Insanity presupposes brains.' Dear, blessed papa! how I

did try him in my arithmetic. Dick, where is papa now?"

The suddenness of this question gave Dick a turn.

"The Lord knows!" he replied. "In heaven, if there is such a place."

"And heaven is right here, if we only have eyes to perceive it, and papa is right here. That's another thing I believe."

"You won't need an ambulance to convey you to the lunatic asylum," said Dick with a laugh. "You'll walk right in of your own accord some fine day. Say, sis," as Libra turned to leave the room, "I wish you'd read this letter from Helen, and see what you make of it."

"From Helen?"

"Yes, why not from Helen?"

"I did not know as you corresponded, that's all."

"Well, we don't correspond."

"Dear Dick," the girl read aloud. "I answer your kind note as soon as possible that you may have no difficulty in finding another girl for the theatre Thursday. The

fact is, I am engaged for the next two weeks every single evening. Give my love to Elizabeth and say that I shall run in and see her some afternoon this week. Yours in haste, Helen."

"She must have been in an excruciating hurry, don't you think so?" Dick asked with curling lip. "Upon my soul," he added, "I don't know what to make of the thing."

"Why, it's as plain as the nose on you face, dear. Helen is engaged for the next two weeks. Can't you read?"

"Yes, hang it, I can read, but I don't understand."

"But what can you want of Helen, any way?" Libra inquired, trying to be serious. "Why, it was only a few weeks ago that you told me you couldn't bear her?"

"Well, what if I did? That was mother's fault, pestering and nagging me all the time. She'd make anybody hate an angel from heaven."

"And then, Dick," his sister resumed, "I think I remember correctly that you told me you thought Helen was really fond of

you. That fact didn't seem to agree with you either."

"I was a consummate ass, that's what I was. Why, Elizabeth, that girl scarcely sees me when we meet on the street, and this is the third time I have asked her to go out with me lately. Once she answered by telegram. What do you think of that? I tell you I don't understand such behavior."

"I do. When you take a notion to have Helen accompany you somewhere, you feel that she should break any engagement to gratify you. Which one of the twins is it, Castor or Pollux, who cannot bear Helen, and which one is hurt and offended because she refuses an invitation? Ah, Dickie, Dickie, you have a hard job on your hands—you have got to make those twins of the very same mind, and then you'll be an individual."

"If you think I'm going," Dick began, "to have any girl play fast and—" but his sister did not wait for the conclusion of the sentence. She threw him a smile and a kiss and went laughing from the room.

XVI.

WHAT could it mean, Elizabeth wondered, that she should be left so utterly alone in this the supreme crisis of her life? The teacher who had so interested and instructed her on that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon had told her to call upon him again if she really needed his counsel. Three times she had presented herself at his door only to find him out. Mrs. Winterhead seemed suddenly stricken dumb as far as her son's affairs were concerned, and the anxious and vacillating girl dared not place upon this dear friend the responsibility of answering the question which haunted her day and night.

Once in her desperation she said to her, "If Horace would give me another year to become better acquainted with him and myself, I should be a very happy girl."

Mrs. Winterhead scowled and looked annoyed, then answered lightly:

"Oh, men are always anxious to come into possession, whether it is a dog, a house, or a woman that is involved in the transaction."

Possession? How Libra shrank from that word. But so sick at heart was she that she could not argue the point or ask for any further information.

Possession? Sweet and lovely though Mr. Winterhead was, he of course possessed his wife, although it did seem exactly the other way to the observant girl. This beautiful woman bore her yoke lightly and made the best of her servitude. Since a girl must marry somebody, that is the way she would do. Surely Mrs. Winterhead extracted a great deal of pleasure from life, and she and her husband always appeared the jolliest of comrades. It couldn't be all feigned. Perhaps she and Horace could adapt themselves to each other in the same way.

There were two persons about this time that Mrs. Winterhead had very little use for. One was her son and the other was Mrs. Eastman. But she had no influence over either, and it was equally out of her power

to infuse the spirit of individuality into Elizabeth. She had tried and failed. The girl had everything, Mrs. Winterhead said in her wrath, but backbone, and if that was ever developed it would doubtless be through the exercise of tribulation, and she'd get enough of that if she married Horace. Perhaps she might as well enter the marriage relation with him as with somebody else later. She would be gobbled up by some man who might be a more undesirable companion than her son. In this way Mrs. Winterhead disposed of the matter.

Libra had protested against being hurried into marriage to her mother, but she had never spoken the direct word to her lover. She had simply temporized. The fact was that the will of the man was so potent that her own desires and intentions melted away before it like the dew before the sun. But the days of evasion and putting off were ended. The time had come when Libra must make her final decision, and after that there could be no more vacillation. If there were only somebody to help, some one in

heaven or upon earth to speak the wise word, the anxious girl constantly told herself, it would all be so different. She was sure that she would be obedient to the counsel of one who knew better than she how to choose. This is the thought of all the genuine Libras, but they are often mistaken. True happinesss can come only through the exact balance of the scales, and this must be their own work. This Libra had not been without revelation, but the most powerful, which was the protest of her own spirit, bade fair to be entirely disregarded. She did not recognize the God in herself. When would she?

The interview of Horace with his mother had not been productive of any good results, at least so far as outward appearances could be relied upon, and the archer wished that she had kept her bow and arrows out of sight on that memorable evening. It was plain to the observant eyes of his mother that peace or war would be immediately declared. If he could not carry his point the engagement would be broken.

Libra felt the chains tightening about her, and was intuitively aware that the day of her doom or her deliverance was nigh. She fully intended to marry Horace Winterhead some time, and had never had any serious thought of breaking her promise, but she did want her liberty for a while longer, and as she had told his mother, many things might happen in a year. Perhaps Horace would see some one he liked better than herself, and that would be beautiful. In such a case all responsibility would be lifted from her shoulders. After that she felt very certain there would be no more entanglements of the kind for her. But it was impossible to break her promise, and while she ardently wished that somebody would break it for her, she still felt that it would be a very unwise thing to do, since she must marry somebody and that before long, according to the traditions of the world. But a year's grace she was determined to have, and after that the deluge, she told herself.

Libra was fertile in resources and had with the most consummate tact avoided the

point at issue, but one evening, some weeks after his talk with his mother, Capricorn arrived at the Eastman mansion with his mighty mind made up. He had been played with long enough. Elizabeth would be his wife early in June or she would never be his wife. He had arranged everything for a summer abroad, and he would no longer hold his plans in abeyance because of the whims of a foolish girl.

There were no guests and no members of the family present on this occasion, so Capricorn had the scales entirely at his mercy, and never were they more wobbly and unreliable.

"I am thankful to find you alone, Elizabeth," were his first words. "I don't think we have had one hour to our exclusive selves in the last month, and I'm getting very tired of it."

"We happen to live in the world, Horace," the girl answered, "and it seems necessary to be civil to our guests."

"I think you have been more than civil, but that is neither here nor there. My er-

rand here to-night, Elizabeth, is for the purpose of coming to a definite conclusion concerning our marriage."

"What about it?" Libra asked, with lips which twitched and trembled in spite of herself. Her eyes were cast down, her face averted. With all the promises she had made herself in regard to standing firm about the time of the wedding, she realized that she was conquered at the outset by the man who possessed a will and dared assert it.

"You know without asking," was the somewhat curt answer. "You are well aware that I wish to be married the first of June, and unless you can give a good reason on the spot for refusing this request I shall insist upon that date."

A good reason on the spot! It is exceedingly difficult for a Libra native to give reasons under the most congenial circumstances, but to give them on the spot with such an environment would be an utter impossibility.

"Will you not tell me, Elizabeth," the young man added in a little softer tone, as

his companion did not speak, "why you want to keep me on the rack like this? I think I have been exceedingly patient and considerate. Most men in my place would have behaved very differently."

"I suppose I have been trying," the girl replied at last. "I almost always am. At least, that is what mamma says; but, Horace, I did not know that I had been guilty of the rack, and as I really wanted a little more time I did not see why I was not entitled to it."

"You have promised to be my wife, have you not?" Capricorn inquired.

"Why, of course."

"Then what do a few months matter?"

"That's what I was thinking," said Libra, archly. "You see, Horace," she added, "I wanted a year longer very much——"

"What for?"

The young man's face hardened as he spoke, and the scales trembled violently.

"To get acquainted with myself, I think," the girl replied sadly.

"You are too much given to introspection

already," said her companion. "That habit is bad enough in a man, but in a woman it is fatal. You want to come out of yourself, Elizabeth, and be the bright, cheery, brilliant woman that nature intended you to be. And, above all things, dear, you need to renounce your tendency to fads. You want my influence, my support, my counsel about you all the time. Will you not oblige me, my love, and by so doing consult your own highest welfare?"

Here was Libra's opportunity, but the poor girl did not know it. The voice within that was constantly clamoring for entire freedom had been regarded as an evil suggestion, except in the very rare moments of illumination, and at this critical moment was utterly dumb. "My influence, my support, my counsel," kept repeating themselves most disagreeably, but this was on account of her inherent depravity, the foolish child told herself. She had become so morbidly critical that she was finding fault with everything. And so, uncertain of herself, despairing of any outside help, she turned a

white, weary face to her determined lover, and said:

"Let it be when you please. Talk it over with mamma, but remember, Horace, the wedding must be strictly a family affair, and here at home."

For this point Libra would have most valiantly fought; indeed, would have stopped at nothing in this really unimportant matter to have her own way. Firm as a rock on things of small account, and shifting as the clouds in those of vital import, was this native of the upper ether.

"I knew, dearest," Capricorn replied, his fine eyes aglow with the victory he had achieved, "that you would be as glad as I to have the wedding at an early date. It was only a little whim of yours. You don't know how happy you have made me."

XVII.

THE matter of the wedding once settled, there was nothing to do, Libra assured herself, but to make the best of it. She had failed in her attempts for a procrastinated freedom, as she was quite positive she always would fail when it came to a conflict of will between herself and her intended husband. Mrs. Eastman was now more serene than her daughter had ever known her to be. She gave the latter *carte blanche* in the work of choosing and buying the wedding garments, and seemed to have banished the idea of a church wedding entirely from her mind. Indeed, this lady was so delighted at having carried the main point—a consummation which she never really expected—that she would not have been much disturbed had the bride-elect determined to be married in her travelling costume. Mrs. Eastman, natural grumbler though she was,

knew better than to find fault with success. Elizabeth could never hope to attain her mother's worldly wisdom.

If it had not been for the disagreeable behavior of Richard at this time, harmony would have seemed to reign in the household. But he was a great trial to both mother and sister. His mental condition seemed one of chronic exasperation. He was rarely at home of an evening, and when compelled to be was silent and sullen. After various futile attempts to induce a better feeling, Libra was forced to abandon her efforts.

Only those who have been in this girl's place, which was not only a halting between two opinions, but a condemnation of herself for being swayed a moment by either, can imagine what she suffered in these days of preparation—days that slipped by all too quickly, notwithstanding the sorrow that each one brought. She had almost persuaded herself into the belief that the chief reason of the keen and unmitigated unhappiness at the present time was not because

she did not want to marry this estimable and really splendid fellow some time, but that she did not wish to be a wife so soon. The only answer to this was the mental query, "What will a few months matter anyway?" and the philosophical response, "It'll be all the same a hundred years from now." But there was no comfort in either question or answer.

One morning, after a night spent in uncanny dreams and strange visions, the weary girl decided to call once more upon the great occult teacher. If she were not admitted this time she would never try again. Greatly to her astonishment, she found the gentleman alone and apparently waiting to receive her.

"It almost seems as if you were expecting me," she remarked, soothed at once by the atmosphere of peace which pervaded the place.

"Yes, I knew you were coming," was the quiet answer.

"I wonder if you also know that I have been here twice within the last two months and did not find you?"

"Yes, child."

"I thought I needed you very much on both those occasions."

"My dear girl, you imagine that you have been trying to find me. You are quite mistaken. You are simply looking for yourself."

"But you remember you told me to come to you if I could not get on alone? I thought I could not both of those times. To-day I was sure of it. I know in a vague sort of a way what you mean by looking for myself, but you must have thought that you could help me, or you would not have permitted me to come."

"The only way that I can be of assistance to you is by pointing to the place where the true Libra lives."

"Where is that?"

"In the kingdom of God."

"But how shall I reach it?"

"By the realization of your Father's love and omnipresence, by the knowledge that His mansions are all open to you, and that He awaits all His children upon the threshold."

Libra thought of her dream, and said eagerly:

"Oh, I had a vision like that one night, and it was beautiful, but it was my own father who stood upon the threshold. He did not not even have to rise from his chair to answer my timid knock."

The teacher smiled.

"You have had many visions, and many glimpses of spiritual things have been given you, but you have received them carelessly."

"Only because, my dear sir, that I feared my imagination was running away with me," the girl replied. "And just think," she added, with wet eyes, "I have no one to whom I can talk about the matters that interest me more than all other things in the world."

"You simply need to think about them, to study the meaning for yourself. People talk too much."

"I am going to be married." This after a long pause, which her companion made no attempt to break.

"Well?"

The tone was kind and fatherly, but the call upon her for an explanation revived all her fear and indecision.

"I don't know what to tell you about it," she remarked, after a vain attempt to put her thoughts into coherent language.

"Can you not tell me what you tell yourself concerning it?"

"That would be impossible, because my thoughts are never twice alike. I do not know what I think or how I feel. I do not know anything. I seem like one enveloped in a dense fog—one who has lost her way."

"Do you think you can tell me what is the dominant wish of your soul?"

"Indeed, I can," said the girl with shining eyes. "I long with all my heart and mind and spirit for freedom, true unrestricted freedom—a great joyful liberty to work out my own problems and to be accountable to One only, and that one my Heavenly Father."

The master's smile was full of tenderness and his eyes grew strangely luminous as he concentrated his gaze upon the beautiful countenance of his companion.

"That must be your ultimate attainment, my child," he replied; "and it depends entirely upon yourself how many barriers you are compelled to remove in your struggle for individuality. Remember, please," as Libra was about to speak, "that while it does not appear so, and is the most difficult of all things for the average human being to realize, we really do make our own limitations. The soul that has enfranchised itself knows no boundaries."

"But do you not see," the girl inquired with sweet eagerness, "that my desire for freedom conflicts with others' desires for me? For instance, are we not told to obey our parents, and when a woman is married is she not expected to obey her husband? The freedom that I am talking about has nothing whatever to do with this sort of obedience. Will you please, please, *please*, tell me what I am to do?"

Still tender and pitiful were the teacher's eyes, but he shook his head gravely at this request.

"You must decide for yourself between

the voice of God in your own soul and the worldly wishes of those about you. I should not be justified in saying definitely, do thus and so, to one of my students, but it would be safer to do so for those in any other domain than yours. I know what you suffer, for I have endured it all."

Libra was too considerate to inquire how her companion had attained his liberty, but he saw the thought in her mind and added: "I came to my estate after years of conflict from which I would gladly save you, but you must be allowed to go your way as I was permitted to go mine. I will tell you this, because I read your great anxiety to know—my regeneration, my birth into a true individuality, was accomplished in the twinkling of an eye. After building fences about myself and allowing others to rear all the barriers they pleased, until it did not seem that even God's mighty arm could rescue me, suddenly the Divine in myself spoke the liberating word, and I was absolutely free. It was accomplished in a second, literally in no longer time than the opening and shut-

ting of an eye. I should not be in the least surprised if it were so in your case."

"Is it possible ever to reach a place where one will not be swayed by others' opinions and desires? Now, I sometimes feel very strong when I am by myself, and make strong vows of what I will do, but as soon as I come into the atmosphere of one in opposition and with a strong will to carry his point, I am of no more account than a straw in a gale of wind, and it always ends by my feeling that he, she, or they know everything and I am a fool."

"Yes, my child, I know all about it," her companion replied consolingly. "It will not always endure. You have flown too high, received too much revelation to remain always under bondage. By and by you will break loose——"

"Oh, tell me when it will be?" the girl pleaded, her charming face radiant with the light of a new hope.

"The moment you know yourself a child of God, the instant that you realize your responsibility as a divine individuality—then

and not till then," the teacher answered. "This consciousness may come to-day or to morrow, and it may be some time delayed; but take this prophecy with you—the soul to whom God has revealed Himself as plainly and as beautifully as He has to you, never can be happy one instant in bonds. The shackles of tradition, creeds, customs, as well as the shackles of family influence and personal will, must inevitably be removed from your spirit, but you will be compelled to loosen them yourself. Then they will drop off forever."

"Will it be in this life?" Libra inquired, in an awed tone.

"There is but one life, my child. My prophecy has reference to this incarnation."

"And you cannot tell me the time?"

"I cannot."

"You believe in the sacredness of a promise, I am sure?"

"A sacred promise should be sacredly kept."

"I wanted to postpone my marriage a year, but have not been permitted to do so.

Would it have been better had I insisted upon this delay?"

"I have no right to answer such questions, because the moment I do so I am infringing upon your rights as an individual. All these things, as I have told you before, you must manage for yourself. I see that you do not ask advice of your friends as frequently as formerly, and that you listen now sometimes to the voice of the spirit. Cultivate this listening attitude. You will hear wonderful things, glad tidings of great joy, which it shall be your privilege to give to the world. You may come again, my child, when you have something to tell me."

"Oh, how beautiful it all was, but how elusive," the anxious girl thought as she made her way homeward. Why could not this man, who knew so much and saw so far, tell her exactly what to do? But she would overcome some time, and she must do it all herself. Well, she would do her best, and perhaps her influence might be potent enough to reach Horace. She would be very wise and patient, and after a while they

would grow nearer together in those things that were so dear and sacred to her. But she could not go on deceiving him after marriage as she was deceiving him now. What if he were to know of her visit this afternoon, of the two hours spent without a companion or chaperon in the office of this stranger? She almost wished that some one would tell him, and the thought caused her cheeks to burn and her eyes to sparkle. But this was an unworthy, a wicked suggestion, she argued, and then she wondered how she came by the cowardice that had seemed to be her besetting sin from infancy. If she had only possessed the courage to place all her doubts and fears before Horace, she might be a much happier girl to-day; but then he would not have listened. He never had seriously regarded anything she had told him or tried to tell him, for she could not remember of ever having finished one statement or confession that she had felt called upon to make since the commencement of their acquaintance. Well, there was nothing to do but to submit to a chronic

course of this squelching process. Perhaps this was exactly what she needed, and perhaps it was the only method by which her salvation could be worked out.

When Libra reached the house she found her mother much excited. Richard had come home in a high fever and had gone to bed.

"It is perfectly terrible to have it happen just at this time," said Mrs. Eastman, "when we are all standing on our heads, as it were, so busy with our preparations that we have scarcely time to breathe, let alone eat and sleep; but we must do the best we can. But in no case, Elizabeth, never mind how ill Richard is, will the wedding be postponed. I confess that I am very superstitious on that subject, but I have seen such awful results in several cases that I don't know as anybody can blame me."

"Such as old maids, mamma?" Libra inquired.

"Yes, just that. You have hit the nail squarely on the head. You do sometimes. Now if you'll run up and stay with Richard,

I'll go to the drug store and see if I can have some medicine put up that helped him once before when he was feverish. I'll try that to-night, and if he isn't any better in the morning we'll send for the doctor."

Dick was indeed in a sad plight. His face was scarlet and his hands burning.

"Didn't have to make believe this time," he groaned as his sister drew a chair to the bed.

"That's evident, Dickie; but what caused this condition?"

"Did anybody ever know what caused anything?" was the irritable reply.

"But how long have you felt ill?"

"Oh, I've been boiling and stewing some time, but I've been roasting and broiling since yesterday."

"What happened yesterday?"

"Happened? Who said anything happened?"

"A little bird just told me."

"What do you mean by a little bird?"

"My sixth sense, my intuition."

"Oh, hang that! I didn't know but what you had really heard something."

"So I have."

"What is it?"

"That you are a very foolish boy to put any confidence in a rumor."

"Say, look here, sis—this is serious! Don't go to fooling me, because you think I am ill," and now Richard sat up in bed and took his companion by the shoulders. "Now that you know," he went on eagerly "I've no objection to telling you that John Farrington told me that he knew for sure that Helen was engaged to Jack Darrish."

Libra shook her head.

"It is not true," she said, with a smile.

"Not true?" young Gemini exclaimed. "Would you mind taking your oath on it, Elizabeth? Tell me how you know."

"Because I heard the report and I asked Helen about it. She assured me it was not so."

"When?"

"This morning."

"Hail Columbia, happy land!" roared the invalid. "Say, Lib, get out o' here in dou-

ble quick. I want to get into my clothes before mother comes back."

"What are you going to do?" his sister inquired, with some misgivings.

"Ask your little bird. Hurry up now. I wouldn't be caught for ten thousand dollars."

Libra went out laughing, and a few minutes later had the satisfaction of hearing the front door close with the true Dick slam.

When Mrs. Eastman returned and found the room empty, her anger and distress were in about equal proportions.

"Mamma, I could not help it," Libra explained. "He drove me out of the room, saying that he was going to get up. Not long after that I heard him whistling down the stairs, and then the front door closed."

"But you saw how ill he was," shrieked the frantic woman, "and you let him go out. Of course he was delirious, and you didn't have sense enough to restrain him. Oh! Elizabeth, Elizabeth, will a time ever come when you can be trusted?"

"Yes, mamma," the girl replied with fine satire. "After I am married. Marriage is the making of every girl, you have told me often, and just think how short the time is now between foolishness and wisdom."

XVIII.

EVERYTHING was in readiness for the wedding and everybody, with the one exception of the bride, but she tried on her dresses obediently and was sweet and considerate at all times. It had come to the inevitable now, and Libra was determined to meet it with a smiling face. The resolute and ambitious lover, entirely unskilled in reading beneath the surface, was quite content with the behavior of the beautiful girl so soon to be all his own. Elizabeth had toned down a good deal since his acquaintance with her, he told himself with great satisfaction. She would make an ideal companion and hostess, with her fine powers of entertainment and the repose of manner which she seemed now to have acquired so perfectly.

To do Mrs. Eastman full justice, it must be said that she occasionally stopped a moment in her elaborate wedding preparations

to ask some questions of her own soul. This was by no means a pleasant operation. She had never been in the habit of taking herself to task or of criticising her own actions in any respect. But Elizabeth was so changed, and although this change was in exact accordance with the frequently expressed maternal desire, it did not seem to please the lady. The girl had been unlike any other girl from the day of her birth, and it was not likely that she ever would be entirely satisfactory to those who were obliged to live with her. Sometimes Mrs. Eastman felt a twinge of pity for her prospective son-in-law, and on a few recent occasions she had actually gone so far as to wonder how this marital business would turn out.

Mrs. Winterhead had also made her best bow to the inevitable, and since doing so had used every possible means to be of service to her young friend. Horace had never been quite the same with his mother since the evening when they came so dangerously near a quarrel, but a true Sagittarius, after

having performed what seems to be a duty, can usually wait with exceeding patience for her or his opponent to come round. The only point now for this kind-hearted woman to consider was how she could help to make happy the girl for whom she had so true and earnest an affection.

"I don't like the looks of Elizabeth," Mr. Winterhead remarked to his wife after spending an evening with the Eastmans, the last visit before the wedding.

"You don't say that you really at last notice something?" his wife inquired.

"I don't like her looks at all," the gentleman repeated, quite disregarding his wife's sarcastic remark. "She seems to me to-night like a beautiful statue wound up and set a-going by some hidden intricate machinery. What under the sun is the matter with her? Doesn't she want to be married? Isn't she in love with Horace?"

"Haven't I told you one thousand times that they were not fitted for each other—did not belong together; and now when it comes to the last moment and there is no earthly

way of preventing this marriage, you suddenly discover that Elizabeth is unhappy. Why couldn't you have seen it before and aided me a little in my attempts to put a stop to the foolish and wicked business?"

"Dear heart, I have never known you to need assistance in anything you started to do," the sweet and patient Pisces replied. "Sometimes you may have required to be held back a little," he added smilingly, "but that is all."

"Yes, and you held me back in this," his wife replied. "If it had not been for your fears and misgivings, I might perhaps have accomplished something."

"I guess it's only perhaps," the gentleman responded. "Horace was determined to marry her from the first, and the inferior will had to give way—that's all."

"That's all? Isn't that enough? What business has a woman with an inferior will?"

"They don't all have it, dear. I've known women who took the reins of government in their hands as soon as they turned their backs upon the altar."

"And what would have become of the men if they had not, I'm sure I can't tell."

"Nor I," said Pisces, with the utmost good humor. "I sincerely wish that Elizabeth had a will to match Horace's. Of course the fur would fly a little while, but ultimately they would both give up."

"And now she'll do it all," said Mrs. Winterhead, with a sigh.

"Just as I have," sighed her husband, with an excellent imitation of his companion's manner.

"If I thought you meant that——"

There was a flash of the fine eyes, but in an instant a pair of loving arms were clasped about the impulsive Sagittarius, and water once more extinguished fire.

During these latter days Libra spent every moment that she could possibly wrest from dressmakers and milliners alone in her room. She had grown quite skilled in the art of concentration since her acquaintance with the renowned teacher, and could enter a state of utter silence and passivity with remarkable ease. At these times she saw and

heard many strange things. One night as she lay quiet and almost breathless upon her bed, a hand was held out to her in the darkness, and a tender voice whispered:

"Child, are you willing to walk with me?"

"Where do you go?" the girl asked.

"Up and away from all the turmoil and sorrow that surround so many of earth's travellers," was the sweet reply.

"I would like that, but what about my duty?"

"'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me,'" said the unseen visitor. "To shine as the sun shines upon the just and the unjust, to love as God loves, is to do the highest duty. The larger includes the lesser."

"Yes, I will go with you," and now the happy girl held out her hand and clasped the one again held out to her.

"Then it is a promise?"

"A promise," said Libra, and that moment she awakened from her dream or her trance.

"At last, oh, at last," she sobbed in her

joy, "the angel for whom I have prayed so long has visited me. How many, many times have I listened as the messengers of mercy passed my window, ascending and descending, for one of the dear ones to stop and speak a word to me. But is it not pitiful that there is no ode to whom I can tell this beautiful story? Even dear Mrs. Winterhead would smile and say it was the voice of my higher self. And Horace? Perhaps I shall never be able to even hint at these blessed experiences. But what was I told—oh! let me not forget it, for it will help me to bear all things—'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me.'"

From this moment until a day or two before the time set for the wedding, Libra was serene and happy. The promise she had made to go with her unknown friend had no literal significance whatever, as it certainly might have had with the average imaginative girl. It was a spiritual call, an angelic invitation to live above the things of mortal sense; and she felt it possible to do this now because she had some one to help

her. She was not entirely alone. The hand held out to her was somewhat vague and shadowy, but she had clasped it in faith, and the outlines of the figure in the semi-darkness were only just discernible. Still she had heard and answered the voice, and she knew she could never forget those sweet, pleading tones.

A couple of nights before the marriage ceremony, Mrs. Eastman was in a great state of excitement. Elizabeth was to try on her wedding gown for the last time. Helen had been invited to see all the pretty things and to give her opinion concerning the final disposition of laces and ribbons, and to exercise her critical taste in the hang of the shimmering satin skirt, etc., etc. As the various details were carefully attended to, Helen observed that Elizabeth grew very pale, and now and then supported herself by whatever piece of furniture she happened to pass.

"Sit down a few moments and rest yourself," her companion said at last. "There is plenty of time."

"No, thank you," was the trembling answer. "Just find out as soon as possible what needs to be done, and then let me get the thing off. I cannot breathe in it."

"That's just like you, Elizabeth—can't get your breath?" said Mrs. Eastman, irritably. "Why, I can get my hand under your bodice all round. *You* ought to be married in a loose gown and petticoat, such as they wore in my great-grandmother's days."

"Does it seem all right, mamma?" the bride-elect inquired, with an effort.

"We can't tell about the hang of the skirt up here," was the sharp, practical response. "You will have to go down into the drawing-room where you can have more space to move about."

"I don't see how I ever can," the pallid girl replied. "Mamma," she added pleadingly, "I don't know what can be the matter with me. I never felt so strangely in my life. Everything swims before my eyes——"

"Here, take this," and Mrs. Eastman handed her daughter a glass of wine. "This is exactly the way some brides carry on, but

I thought you had better control of your nerves. There, your color is coming back already."

This was true. A moment later the beautiful girl stood erect and apparently mistress of herself. She pointed to the stairs, saying:

"Go on. I will follow."

Mrs. Eastman called to Dick, who had been condemned to a solitary hour in his room, and he and his sister met at the head of the staircase. There was no joy in the young man's countenance, and as he took his sister's sweet face in his hands and kissed tenderly forehead and lips, he whispered, "*Are* you all right, sis? I don't feel as if I could bear it. Say a word to me, please, just one word."

"God is with me, Dickie, dear. That is all I know."

"That's enough if it's true," said Dick, with a vicious twitch of his mustache.

"Hold up her train, Richard!" Mrs. Eastman commanded from the foot of the stairs.

"I wouldn't touch it with a forty-foot pole," replied the young man.

"I'll carry it," said Helen, with a warning glance at the scowling young man. "If Dick attempted to play page, he would probably fall all over it."

And so the procession moved forward, Mrs. Eastman ahead, Elizabeth and Helen next, and Richard bringing up the rear. As they reached the centre of the spacious drawing-room, Mrs. Eastman threw back the *portières* of the library, and there upon the threshold, smiling, handsome, and expectant, stood the happy bridegroom.

What was it that caused this strange hush to fall upon this little company? Whatever it was, it touched Mrs. Eastman with the others, for as she turned her exultant face from the man whose presence in the house no one else had suspected, her lips trembled and her voice would not come at her bidding. The beautiful central figure of the group was queenly and erect, but perfectly motionless, and her face shone with a light which none of the spectators ever saw before. It was glorious, bewildering, angelic.

Mrs. Eastman was the first to break the spell.

"Fine feathers make fine birds," she said, trying to smile and to speak lightly, but the words seemed to freeze upon her lips and the muscles about her mouth to stiffen as with the cold. Then Horace made a move forward, but a slight gesture of Elizabeth's hand had power to detain him.

"Do not come any farther," she said in a low, firm tone. "Between us, Horace, there is a great gulf fixed. I have always been aware of it, but I never saw it till to-night. For having misled you, I humbly ask your pardon. I do not love you—I never could have loved you, though I did my best to think so——"

"Elizabeth, Elizabeth," shrieked the now frantic mother, "what are you doing, what are you saying? Oh, Horace, speak to her —for God's sake, speak to her!"

The young man shook his head.

"I want no unwilling bride," he said; and then, with a sturdy manliness which brought the tears even to Dick's eyes, he stepped for-

ward and took the hand of the girl who had renounced him forever.

"I have nothing to forgive," he said, "but I have much to be sorry for. I must have wished to be deceived, Elizabeth, for I find now that I never have been. Deep down in my heart I have always known that you did not care for me in the way I wished. May I kiss your hand, dear?"

With a glad smile Elizabeth presented her forehead for the farewell caress, and then Richard followed the departing guest to the front door.

"It's tough, old man," said Gemini.

"It's right," said Capricorn, sturdily.

As Dick returned to the drawing-room he met his sister and Helen on their way upstairs.

"Stop a moment, girls," he said; and then, taking Helen's hand, led her to his mother, who was sobbing violently.

"Mother," he said, "it may comfort you a little to know that Helen has promised to be my wife."

The poor woman looked up through her tears and shook her head.

"Nothing will ever comfort me after this disgrace," she said. "Elizabeth," she commanded, "come here."

The girl, still radiant with her new-found happiness, stepped forward.

"After this," Mrs. Eastman went on, "you cannot expect——"

"I expect nothing, I desire nothing that you can give me," Elizabeth interrupted; "but do not make any threats to-night that you may be sorry for in the morning. Whatever befalls me, I am *free*, FREE, FREE, mistress of myself forever and ever. Amen."

The scales were poised at last.

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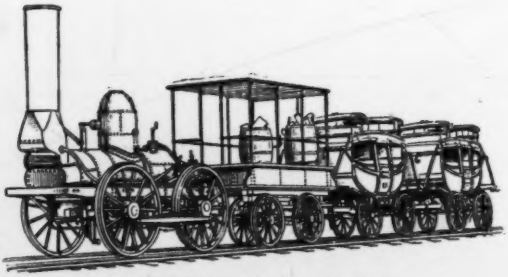

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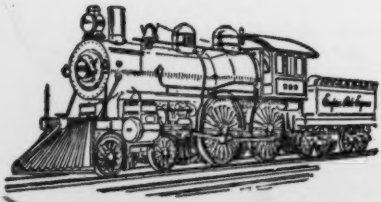

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A PARTIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRA SIGN, FROM ELEANOR KIRK'S BOOK, "THE INFLUENCE OF THE ZODIAC UPON HUMAN LIFE."

Libra.

THE SCALES.

MIDDLE SIGN OF THE AIR TRIPLICITY.

September 23 to October 23.

This sign governs the loins and reins of the Grand Man, or Macrocosm. It is a cardinal, sanguine, diurnal, movable, airy, equinoctial, masculine sign of the Zodiac. This is the great equatorial line of human progression; the higher attributes are perception and inspiration. The Sun enters the sign each year on or about the 23d of September, and departs from it on or about the 23d of October. The Sun on entering a sign should be given six days before coming into full touch and action with the influence of the sign. A person born between the dates of the 23d and 29th of September would not receive the full results of the sign's individuality, as he would be born when the Sun was on the edge of the sign. This is known as the Cusp, and its nature and impulses partake of the sign the Sun has just passed through and out from, and the native will also partake of the attributes of the sign of the Zodiac in which the Moon is located at the time of birth.

PEOPLE born under this sign are energetic, ambitious, generous, and inspired. The

men and women are said to differ even more than Leo men and women, and probably from the same reason. The Libra men having had to seek their own way, and to find their own companions and occupations, early learn to turn their inspirations and their clairvoyant ability to financial account, and so become stockbrokers and sometimes gamblers. The scales of Libra tip very easily, and too often one scale touches bottom with a dead weight, while the other swings aloft unused and empty. Libra men are very fascinating, and they are as reckless in following out the gratification of their desires as they are in gambling games and speculations. This pursuit is not so much sensual as sensuous, and is more of an eagerness for new objects of attraction than an impulse of passion. When overtaken by disaster, they recover quickly and go to work again with redoubled vigor. Their feet never touch the earth in their calculations and intrigues. They are full of hope and enthusiasm, and crash after crash produces no effect. The Libra women who have not

had the masculine liberty are not so reckless as their brothers. They are apt to be careless about money matters, and this is often due to their extreme aversion to the financial part of any transaction. They detest to be mixed up with money matters. They are not intentionally dishonest, for they always expect to be able to pay their debts, and often borrow with the noblest intentions, but if anything occurs to thwart their calculations—and ten to one it does—they expect the person borrowed from to be as magnanimous in forgiving the debt as they would be in paying it if they had the money. And yet these people, both men and women, have a keen and beautiful sense of justice; they are also exceedingly intuitive and mediumistic. When spiritualized, the scales hang evenly balanced, and the work that can be accomplished for humanity by the Libra people cannot be overestimated. Among them are poets, writers, and musicians. They soar high because the most rarefied air is their native element. They will give away the largest half of anything they possess, and

never expect an equivalent. They are timid and apprehensive of disaster to their children and friends, and cause much nervous anxiety to their families and others.

Those born under this sign, especially the women, are so sensitive to harmony or inharmony that they can tell as soon as they enter a house what the prevailing conditions are. This sometimes makes them appear sad, indifferent, or disturbed, and they are considered very disagreeable and inconsistent. Their high spirits are subdued, and a shadow falls upon all who are in their company. As it is not usually safe or proper to explain the reason of the cloud, the victims are obliged to suffer and be silent. This tendency to feel every change in those about them, and to read secret thoughts, is a constant menace to the best development.

It keeps the individual harassed by anxieties which cannot be relieved or spoken of. In this way the sympathies are kept in constant action and without subserving any good purpose.

When this psychic power is dominated by

the will, and made to mind its own business, and keep out of other people's affairs, it is a wonderful force, but, used on a lower plane, is a source of unrest and misery.

Libra women are very kind and amiable, and are averse to any cruelty and bloodshed. The women and children dislike to know that even a chicken must be killed. They are very neat, and dislike any hard and dirty work. The other type of Libra people is to be found more among the males, who have broad, round foreheads, and are cunning and quick speculators, having wonderful perceptive faculties. These will usually be found in the stock markets, where they are very fortunate. These men are apt to be very inconstant.

Libra people are psychic collectors of thought, having the ability to acquire the occult laws of nature. Possessing the power of perception of spiritual knowledge, they can reach the highest goal of human attainment by bringing their powers to a centre within the bosom. Those who recognize the dawning of the life regenerate, can acquire

the divine and hidden mysteries of the ages. The governing planet is Venus, and the gems are diamond and opal. The astral colors are those represented upon the covers of this volume—black, crimson, and blue.

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